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**THE STRATEGIC PRACTICES OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN PUBLIC
SERVICES:**

A CASE OF INSTITUTIONAL WORK UPWARDS AND OUTWARDS

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PHD THESIS

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Abbreviations

BCF:	Better Care Fund
CCG:	Clinical Commissioning Group
CE:	Corporate Executive
DCLG:	Department for Communities and Local Government
DFG:	Disabled Facilities Grant
EE:	External Executive
HIA:	Home Improvement Agency
MM:	Middle Manager
NICE:	National Institute of Clinical Excellence
ODPM:	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

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Abstract

Middle managers play a crucial role in contributing to strategy. Much existing research focuses on trying to understand the desired characteristics and competencies of these managers, in order to explain their ability to sell issues to top executives (upwards) and external stakeholders (outwards). Though this yields valuable insights, it does not account for the role of an institution as: 'more or less taken for granted behaviour that is underpinned by normative systems and cognitive understanding that give meaning to social exchange and thus enable self-reproducing social order' (Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin and Suddaby; 2008:4). This thesis examines how middle managers sell issues upwards and outwards, in a setting where attending to institutions is central: public service reform, concerning home improvement. It does so by looking through the lens of institutional work. This allows insight into how different jurisdictions and organizational and professional boundaries overlap and at times conflict. In analysing interviews and observations, the thesis mobilizes a central concept in institutional work: the concept of institutional pillars, to explain differential levels of success in implementing reform. These pillars can be regulatory (to do with policies and conventions), cultural ('the way we do things around here'), or normative (concerning basic values). In broad terms the thesis demonstrates that reform in this setting is progressively less likely to be implemented as one moves from the regulatory domain, to the cultural and normative domains. This complements accounts of middle manager competence, with a more fine-grained insight into how contextual complexities can prefigure the likelihood of successful strategy implementation.

Introduction

This study explores the activities of middle managers (MMs) as they champion and sell issues both upwards and outwards. It contributes to understanding the strategic role of middle managers by drawing on the literature relating to how middle managers, ... ‘read the context to assess its favourability for raising strategic issues’ (Dutton, Ashford, O’Neill, Hayes and Wierba, 1997:407) when championing and selling issues (e.g. Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992; Dutton and Ashford, 1993; Dutton, Ashford, O’Neill and Lawrence, 2001) to corporate, political and external executives.

The principal situations relating to selling issues upwards are the streamlining of steps taken to deliver home adaptations and integrating service-delivery across a range of partners. The main situation involving selling an issue outwards involves endeavours to sell the concept of the installation of timely home adaptations to reduce costs to healthcare services.

Looking through the lens of institutional work this study explores the role of middle managers and identifies and explains purposeful actions associated with creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca, 2009, 2011). Institutional work provides a, ... ‘broader vision of agency in relationship to institutions, one that avoids depicting actors either as “cultural dopes” trapped by institutional arrangements, or as hyper-muscular institutional entrepreneurs’ (Lawrence et al., 2009: 1). This perspective is

particularly valuable given the complex and differentiated role middle managers play in enacting strategy. In particular,...'middle managers construct their identity at any given moment, accepting that there will never be a final truth claim' (Thomas and Linstead, 2002:87).

As well as avoiding a simplistic dichotomy between cultural dopes / hyper muscular institutional entrepreneurs (Lawrence et al., 2009) another benefit of institutional work is that the concept "institution" encompasses a wide range of social phenomena. Within the literature review an institution is defined as, ... 'more or less taken for granted behaviour that is underpinned by normative systems and cognitive understanding that give meaning to social exchange and thus enable self-reproducing social order' (Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin and Suddaby; 2008:4). It includes the kinds of structures that are examined in seminal accounts of organizational change and service-redesign. An example of an institution within an organization is, ... 'the introduction of a new work role (nurse practitioner) into a well established health care system' (Reay, Golden-Biddle and Germann 2006: 977). It also includes routines, mental models and established ways of doing things embracing a wider examination of, ... 'hierarchies of status between categories of occupations or between organizations that affect hiring patterns and alliances' (Greenwood et al., 2008: 5).

'The concept of institutional work describes "the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting organizations"'

(Lawrence et al., 2009:1; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:215). Accordingly, it is well

suited to examine different aspects to managerial work involved in trying to address the various kinds of deep-seated challenges prompted by debates on cost effectiveness in public services. These can also be linked to the debate on the extent to which organizational culture can be linked to effectiveness within the public-sector (Ashworth, 2010). In particular, institutional work allows for a nuanced and multifaceted account of managerial influencing strategies, and shows where influencing strategies are more and less likely to succeed.

Within institutional work these activities are framed within the three institutional pillars associated with institutional work: regulatory, cultural-cognitive and normative (Scott, 2001; Zietsma and McKnight, 2009). The regulatory pillar represents processes that, ... ‘both constrain and regularize behaviour being underpinned by rules that are either formal or informal and supported by monitoring and sanctioning activities’ (Scott, 2001:51). The cultural-cognitive pillar embraces activities that focus on compliance arising because, ... ‘other types of behaviour are inconceivable; routines are followed because they are taken for granted as “the way we do these things”’ (Scott, 2001:57). The normative pillar is based on, ... ‘normative rules that introduce a prescriptive, evaluative and obligatory dimension into social life (Scott, 2001:54).

To foreshadow the findings in terms of these three pillars the benefits are that some aspects to managerial work, in terms of achieving influence and being able to 'sell' issues, are easier in this setting whereas others are more difficult, or almost impossible. This more fine-grained account is only realisable because of combining

an institutional work lens with a combination of methods that afforded sustained engagement with this setting over time. What, from a distance, seem like activities associated with a common challenge of trying improve or sustain services amid cuts - actually involves different kinds of managerial work, with different outcomes. This offers a promising basis for exploring the challenges of implementing change and achieving influence in other settings where there are overlapping jurisdictions and competing demands on budgets - such as is common to professionalized bureaucracies as a whole. This includes literature that has begun to focus on the scope for partnerships across public-sector organizations that have identified the benefits of sharing access to resources and enacting engagement with different stakeholders (Entwistle, 2010).

The empirical focus is an exploration into the attempts of middle managers to deliver an integrated home improvement agency (HIA) project across a rural county in the United Kingdom. HIA's have been established to enable vulnerable adults, commonly older people, to maintain their independence by enabling them to live comfortably and safely in their own homes. This is achieved through the provision of housing advice and a handyperson service to provide home repairs, home safety and security adaptations. The service also delivers a hospital discharge service and interventions that are aimed at preventing falls. A key achievement has been the bringing together of occupational therapy assistants (provided by the county council) and technical caseworkers, grant officers and technical service officers (provided by the district councils) into a multi-agency line managed team. This has subsequently resulted in the creation of a hybrid role of housing assessment officer arising from

the merger of the two roles. The application of a methodology following the principles of lean systems to the HIA project has eventually enabled agreement in principle to a whole systems approach to improve services. This is in favour of making modifications to existing practices and has led to the decision, in principle, to work towards the rolling out of an integrated HIA service across the county. Currently the HIA service is being delivered on an integrated basis within two regions of the county. However, this is on the basis that there is a desired outcome for one wholly integrated service across the whole county.

When the wholly integrated service becomes fully operational the HIA would operate as a shared service that is hosted by one of the local authorities with staff being transferred or seconded to the host authority. The commissioning of professional services from other local authorities within the partnership would take place as and when required. This partnership also intends to share the objective of seeking improvements and solving problems. It is intended to involve corporate and political executives as part of the governance provisions. The HIA service also intends to operate within the existing funding arrangements and there will be a governance board representing each of the service funders. The governance arrangements need to be agreed through the appropriate procedures in each participating local authority. This will include ensuring that each local authority shares the financial risk and benefits to an agreed formula.

The following research question frames this study:

What practices do middle managers use to accomplish institutional work upwards and outwards?

To test this further the following sub research questions have been derived from the associated literature.

- How do middle managers use types of institutional work to sell issues upwards?
- How do middle managers use types of institutional work to sell issues outwards?
- Are there any contingency factors that impact on these activities?

The contribution is to extend the literature on the issue-selling activities of middle managers (Dutton and Ashford, 1993). This is achieved by undertaking a fine-grained analysis of the strategic role of middle managers in it relation to the organizational hierarchy (Burgelman, 1994; Kuratko and Goldsby, 2004; Mantere, 2005, 2008; Stroh, Brett, Baumann and Reilly 1996). It also extends the findings from Dutton et al's., (1997) subsequent study that identified the complexities of this activity. Upwards activities associated with issue-selling include providing confirmation of performance (Marginson, 2002); alerting of activities (De Clerq, Castaner and Belausteguigoita, 2011); promoting activities (Anderson, 2004; Floyd and Lane, 2002; Raes, Heijltjes, Glunk and Roe, 2011; Sonenshein, 2012) and strategic conversations (Hoon, 2007). This thesis also provides a contribution to studies identifying an increase in issue-selling activity as this relates to economic pressures (Ahearne, Lam and Kraus, 2014; Dutton et al., 1997; Pideret 2000;).

Further explanation is provided on the factors that create favourable and unfavourable conditions for issue-selling (Chen, Berman and Wang, 2014; Howell and Bois, 2004; Mantere, 2005; Miliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2003). The exploration into the outwards activities of middle managers extends previous research that has identified factors curtailing the activities of issue-selling (Crant, 2000; Howard - Grenville, 2007; Morrison, 2011). It also provides further insights into the practical application of Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) taxonomy of institutional work. In particular, this identifies antecedents to institutional work identified as preparatory activities taking place prior to the enactment of purposeful interventions.

The remaining sections of this thesis are divided into the following sections. Firstly consideration is given to research that theorises middle managers within the context of large contemporary organizations. The literature on the developments of the strategic practices of middle managers is then considered, paying special attention to the purposeful activities in can affect the strategic direction of the organization. Attention is then focused on how middle managers sell issues upwards and outwards by championing alternatives and selling issues to top-tier executives. This provides a finer-grained understanding of the strategic activities of middle managers. The application of strategy as institutional work is considered within the context of the activities of middle managers. Consideration is then given to institutional work as a lens for understanding the purposeful activities of middle managers. The contextual situation of the home improvement agency provides background to the empirical situation regarding the middle managers within the case study. The research design considers the methodology, reasons for a single case study and an explanation of

details of the data gathering and the technique for data analysis. The findings are presented as chapters considering issue-selling upwards and outwards exploring the institutional work carried out by middle managers. The discussion chapter provides consideration to how pillars underpin institutions and how institutional work identifies the purposeful activities of actors in creating and maintaining these. Lastly the findings are summarised and the practical implications are considered, together with limitations and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 1 – Theorising Middle Managers

1.1 Introduction

This literature review firstly considers the early perceptions of the role of middle manager in order to set middle management theory in context and demonstrates how this role has evolved within contemporary organizations. The context of where middle managers are located within the organizational hierarchy provides a clearer understanding of their ability to influence strategic decision-making. It also establishes how they are able to interact with upper-tier and external executives. Research on the relationship of middle managers with corporate decision-making provides a basis for understanding how middle managers can contribute to strategic decision-making. Consideration is then given to the literature that has previously considered the position of middle managers in the external environment.

Given that there is a large volume of literature on middle managers each section provides a succinct and chronological review. At the risk of seeming like a list this sets a very clear content for the contribution in the thesis. This is because the thesis extends contemporary insights on middle managers and institutional work and compliments this with an in-depth qualitative study.

1.2 The Role of the Middle Manager

1.2.1 Early perceptions

Pre 1970's research into the activities of middle managers tends to focus on where they sit within a well-defined hierarchy. Historically strategic decisions were made solely by top executives this was in spite of the fact that their day-to-day responsibilities disassociated them from operational activities. Emerging literature from the 1970's contributes to the traditional perception that middle managers could only provide a very limited amount of influence over the decision-making process (Dickson, 1977). Mintzberg's (1978) exploration into how strategy was formulated provided a more optimistic view of the role of the middle manager. This study identifies how successful implementation required the commitment from more than just top executives. This study also highlighted strategic decision-making as a social learning process influenced by middle managers as well as the top executives.

Middle managers were also identified as taking on the responsibility of controlling conflicts between the organization and its external partners (Keys and Bell 1982). Promotion to the role of middle manager also meant sacrificing professional and technical expertise in favour of the often-mundane administrative requirements that were expected from this role (Torrington and Weightman 1982). The lack of appeal in middle management as a career was identified as a common theme amongst many research studies exploring the activities of its incumbents (Dopson and Stewart 1990; Goffee and Scase 1986; Hunt, 1986, Torrington and Weightman, 1987;). This could be attributable to the fact that middle managers were identified as being prevented from providing a strategic input based on receptiveness by the overall workforce because strategy was a function that this resided within the domain of top management interventions (Schlsinger and Oshry, 1984).

However, the idea that middle managers could make a contribution to the strategic decision-making process during this period was not completely dormant. Kanter's (1982) research into the innovative activities of middle managers endorsed their strategic capabilities in being able to add to organizational output through their activity and inventiveness. Burgelman (1983) determined strategic decision-making as often evolving from lower levels of the organization with middle managers commonly championing ideas to the top tier of management.

Although earlier literature emphasised pessimism in the role of middle management, Guth and Macmillan's (1986) study is important in identifying how strategy implementation provided middle management self interest. This gave credence to the fact that they could also play a key role in effective strategy implementation. This is attributable to the fact that strategy had to be accepted as being feasible by middle managers if it was to be implemented effectively. However, Kanter (1986) highlighted the role of the middle managers as being implementers of strategies that they were powerless to change or contribute to and at the same time striving to manage and constrain the aspirations of their free-thinking subordinates. More optimistically Schilit's (1987) quantitative study of middle managers identified them as formulating and implementing strategic decisions and highlighted their capabilities to upwardly influence the less risky issues of the strategic decision-making process.

Later literature still defines the role of the middle manager as being highly unfavourable (Dopson and Stewart, 1990) portrayal identifies middle managers as being fraught with frustrations arising from their position within the hierarchy and

the limited opportunities for them to progress their career (ibid). However, this research study goes onto predict a more optimistic future by highlighting studies that had begun to identify the introduction of information technology into the workplace as providing a new role for middle managers (Buchanan and McCalman, 1988; Nonaka, 1988; Polakoff, 1987).

Dopson and Stewart (1990) also defined the restructurings of the 1980's as yielding fewer tiers of managerial responsibility resulting in a downward devolution of the strategic decision-making process. The very challenging and fast changing climate during this period had also created a redefinition in the purpose and responsibilities of middle managers. The eventual outcome resulted in a situation providing fewer middle managers with more responsibility for a diversity of activities (ibid). Fulop (1991) defined the view of a middle manager's role as stereotypically dealing with bureaucracy and supervision. However, this study also identified that middle managers in sales and marketing positions were provided with a limited amount scope for entrepreneurial activities.

1.2.2 Position within the organizational hierarchy

Kanter's (1982) early study of over 150 managers in several large organizations defines middle managers as typically being department heads with the autonomy to develop new initiatives. However, the subsequent impact of organizational de-layering during the 1980's resulted in middle managers being in more direct contact with top executives and corporate strategy (Dopson and Stewart 1990). Wooldridge and Floyd's (1990) quantitative study also identifies middle managers within the

banking and manufacturing sectors as occupying second tier levels of responsibility, sometimes directly reporting to the chief executive. Dutton and Ashford (1993) define middle managers as occupying a position below the tier of top executives but senior to first level managers emphasising that their role is best defined as being responsible for the supervision of more junior managers but in turn being accountable to others' (Dutton and Ashford, 1993: 398).

Nonaka (1994) argues that where middle managers are specified in the structure chart is less important than their ability to provide the vital link between strategic decision-making activities and the daily operations of the organization. The effectiveness of middle managers in contributing to corporate strategy is that they provided a bridge spanning the strategic vision of top tier executives and the complex frontline problems of the organization (Nonaka 1994).

The position of middle level managers within the organization has also enabled them to provide a vital focal point for observing and determining the steps that are necessary for rebuilding and re invigorating an organizations economic ability (King and Zeithaml, 2001). However, this needs to be considered against the finding that middle managers are in situations where their identity is constructed at any given moment making their exact role within the organization difficult to define (Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Viewed within this context middle managers rely far more on discourse to define their position within the organizational hierarchy and are constantly re defining their role. This is attributable to their parameters of responsibility within the middle of the organization, which are increasingly difficult to define (Thomas and Linstead, 2002).

Balogun (2003) identified that middle managers could make to strategic contribution to strategic decision-making. This longitudinal study explored the activities of middle managers during a change period for a public sector organization that had recently been privatised. The study moved away from the view that middle managers were associated with being resistant to change and sometimes even blocked progress. Instead it identified that there was increasing evidence to suggest the value of middle managers in implementing strategic change. This study highlights a requirement to define the factors that encourage or deter middle managers in becoming effective change agents (ibid).

An exploration into how middle managers perceive their strategic function within the organizational structure is considered in Carney's (2004) study. This research explores the role of middle managers in non-profit making organizations that are undergoing a restructuring of services. A key finding identifies the impact of service reorganization on the nursing profession where the number of redefined managerial tiers has a direct correlation to the role perception of middle managers (ibid).

Rouleau's (2005) study of a Canadian clothes manufacturer demonstrates how middle managers are well placed to promote changes to the strategic direction of the organization. This is achieved by an accumulation of experience and ideas that make them intuitive to what needed to be changed together with how this could be effectively communicated (ibid).

Pappas and Wooldridge, (2007) argue that determining individuals with the most influence over strategy is a difficult process and why some are more effective than others is an important item for research. Nonetheless, the favourable position of the middle manager within the organizational structure enables them to act as the contact point for top tier executives and operational managers (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1999; Nonaka, 1991).

1.2.3 Relationship with executives

Wooldridge and Floyd's (1989) early study into organizational strategic processes determines that while top tier executives sometimes seek the opinions of middle managers the overall task of strategic decision-making resides with the top tier. This research is subsequently extended to emphasise the benefits for top tier executives in allowing middle managers to contribute to strategic decision-making (Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990). Gioia and Chittipedi (1991) identify how middle managers have the ability to exert influence on the changes instigated by top tier executives. This process is enhanced by their position within the organization enabling them to develop ideas identified by subordinates into new strategic initiatives for possible adoption by top tier executives.

Research has also established that middle managers and top tier executives work more cohesively when they share a common view on the strategic position of the organization (Klimoski and Mohammed 1994). This is enhanced through situations involving the shared thinking of middle managers and top executives providing a deeper understanding on how this supports or acts against strategic performance.

Mangaliso's (1995) study into middle managers within a subsidiary of a manufacturing organization provides an insight into the benefits of involving middle managers in the strategic decision-making process. This research establishes a link between the impacts of environmental uncertainty and identifies the importance of middle managers in managing the successful implementation of strategy. The value of including middle managers in decision-making is identified as providing an indication on the extent to which they can exert influence over strategy and while this is variable between organizations it has also been observed as having a direct impact on performance (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1997). Middle managers are also identified as providing a vital contribution to the process of linking ideas between the lower levels of management and the top tier. This is attributable to their position within an organization enabling them to be more likely than actors at other levels to have an awareness of any possibilities of conflict during a change period (Floyd and Lane, 2000).

Later studies identify how the position of middle managers within the hierarchy provides them with the scope to become change-agents within the organization (Huy, 2002). Ketokivi and Castaner's (2004) quantitative survey of middle managers in over 150 units in several countries reveals the strategic direction of the organization increasing by including middle managers in the decision-making process. This is based upon an assessment of the rating of the significance of the targets that have been set for their organization. This research identifies how involving middle managers in strategic planning and communication activities leads to an improved attainment of organizational targets. This also emphasises the link between organizational success and chief executives who recognise the contribution that

middle managers can make to strategic decision-making (Balogun and Johnson, 2004).

Kellermanns, Walter, Lechner and Floyd (2005) establish the drawbacks of keeping strategic decisions within the domain of top executives. These circumstances are identified as neglecting the ability for actors in the rest of the organization to highlight potential adversities that are often unknown to top tier executives. Lines (2005) highlights the benefits for an organization whose top executives decided to include middle managers in a management programme for strategy development. Drawing on a survey sample of middle managers that are also members of the top management team this research identifies how they can make a major contribution to influencing the introduction of changes to strategic decisions. This research also establishes a robust link between participating in strategy and providing learning opportunities to increase an understanding about the organization for those taking part in strategic decision-making (Lines, 2005).

Currie and Proctor's (2005) research into middle managers within three U.K hospitals identifies how disparities between the expectations placed upon their roles leads to them carrying out responsibilities either lacking clarity or opposing the accepted requirements of their role. This study identifies how conflict prevents middle managers from moving into a role where they can have an impact on strategic decision. It highlights how a lack of consistency in role expectations by top tier executives engenders reluctance amongst middle managers to undertake certain aspects of their role. This identifies a requirement for more research that explores the expectations of top executives and what they expect from middle managers and

providing more clarity on the steps that are required to enhance their strategic capability (Ibid).

Mair's (2005) research into a large financial services firm identifies how middle managers put strategy into action to create a favourable impact and an increase the profitability for the organization. This identifies the importance of the role of middle managers in exerting persuasiveness with top executives in the development of strategy. Vila and Canales (2008) also emphasise the benefits of developing a positive relationship between middle managers and top executives in their study of strategic planning with an automobile breakdown service. This provides an insight into joint working between top executives and middle management that proved to be beneficial by converting strategic proposals into a specific action plan. This research endorses the benefits of combining views of top and middle managers at the planning phase of strategy development. It also emphasises the role middle managers can play in enabling top executives to gain a better understanding on how proposed strategic decisions are likely to be accepted by employees across the organization (ibid).

Wooldridge, Schmidt and Floyd (2008) highlight gaps in the research connecting the thoughts and actions of middle managers with chief executives. This is highlighted in the limited research into how middle managers conceive ideas and find novel concepts that have the potential to enhance organizational strategic decision-making (ibid). This activity has synergies with earlier studies (Amason, 1996, Huy, 2001, 2002) highlighting the strategic decision-making process. These studies have highlighted the impact of negative feelings on the strategic behaviour of middle

managers and have an adverse impact on their perception of situations. Future research in this area would provide a greater understanding on how middle managers can cultivate a favourable attitude in situations where strategic change is causing uncertainty and anxiety (Wooldridge et al., 2008).

There is also the scope for identifying how the combined knowledge of middle managers and top tier executives is able to inform strategic decision-making (Wooldridge et al., 2008). This shift in emphasis would explore the extent to these combined efforts could make it easier to implement strategy and increase overall organizational performance. This would build upon the small amount of studies identifying where middle level managers are favourably included in organizational strategic decision-making. The limited research that has been undertaken so far has also been linked to middle management involvement and increased financial outcomes. This, therefore, provides scope to extend and build upon this research and contribute to an exploration into the relationship between middle managers and top tier executives and the contribution that this can make to strategic organizational decision-making (ibid).

1.2.4 Links to the external environment

Floyd and Wooldridge's (1997) survey of the activities of middle managers in boundary spanning positions identifies instances where their position provides them with the opportunity to operate between the internal and external environment. This situation is attributable to the fact that middle managers with responsibilities for maintaining contacts in the external environment have developed an awareness of

external activities that enable them to contribute to internal strategic decision-making (ibid).

King and Zeithaml's (2001) study into 17 organizations has also identified how middle managers contribution to corporate decision-making can be increased through the operation of middle managers in environments where they have cultivated an environment with competitors enabling them to engage in knowledge sharing.

Regnér (2003) explores the way different groups of middle managers in the centre of and on the periphery of an organization participate in the creation of strategy. This study is undertaken by analysing the micro-level processes that are undertaken when developing strategy. Research is conducted into four multinational organizations exploring how middle managers assimilate strategy and knowledge. The key findings from this research identify knowledge structures as being more inductive at the periphery of the organization because they have the opportunity to contribute to internal strategy by developing external exploratory activities. These include experimenting on a trial and error basis and participating in discussions with external contacts (ibid). In contrast the formalised processes of the centre of an organization foster a deductive approach to strategy formation. This created the situation where deductive activities of the centre were mainly endorsing what was known already but it was not adept at initiating new strategic ideas. This suggests that top executives should be more receptive to activities taking place in the periphery in favour of the traditional strategic decision-making in the centre. This would acknowledge the more attuned awareness that these middle managers had gained on external products

and markets (ibid). However, the picture provided in this study is incomplete because the data has been gleaned from only four organizations and there is a danger of generalisation because of the relatively small number of participants. The study also has limitations in focussing on only the implementation of strategies that are generally successful and these gaps can be explored through future research integrating the strategy content and processes (ibid). This research also identifies variations in the operation of strategy between corporate and peripheral middle managers affecting their capability to shape strategic decisions (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009).

Rouleau's (2005) research into the daily activities and interactions of middle managers identifies their interventions resulting in the effective implementation of strategic change in a top quality clothing organization. The micro processes undertaken by middle managers are set within the context of how their daily activities are associated with their intuitive awareness (ibid). This study also identifies a number of key micro activities deployed by middle managers when establishing their relationships with external contacts. In particular, in response to these processes being subject to continual change middle managers developed adeptness to reorganise and utilise their intuition to disseminate these change to others. The study also establishes a link between the discourse used by middle managers when forging a connection between strategy and external actors. This activity was guided by the activities of middle managers in social situations in addition to activities that were enacted in accordance with the objectives of the organization (ibid).

A study of 89 middle managers in a US hospital reveals how that their, ... 'network position both within and outside the organization importantly influences their level of divergent strategic activity' (Pappas and Wooldridge, 2007: 339). This study highlights how the activities of middle managers contribute to the development of internal strategy with the benefit of their external network of contacts. This research emphasises how middle managers are well placed to make use of their external association to gain information that can contribute to the strategic decision-making process.

There are a limited number of research studies that have identified the role of middle managers as being effective negotiators with their external contacts (Balogun and Johnson 2004; Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1993). However, this sparse research is insufficient to define the extent to which there is the potential for middle managers to create and sustain relationships with key executives inside and outside the organization (Wooldridge et al., 2008). Further academic investigations into the activities that are performed horizontally would, therefore, provide an additional contribution to the literature that already exists in this area (Johnson, Langley, Melin and Whittington, 2007). The limited evidence on how middle managers perform external functions (Balogun and Johnson 2004; Burgelman, 1994; Huy 2002) provide scope for additional research to be undertaken that detects how external changes can provide a contribution to future strategic decision-making (Wooldridge et al., 2008). This also highlights the scope for studies that would contribute to the paucity of research on assumptions relating to the role of middle managers in the external environment particularly relating to the conditions influencing behaviour that has a direct impact on change initiatives and organizational outcomes (ibid).

1.3 Conclusion

It is evident from previous literature that middle managers are able to make an important contribution to the strategic direction of an organization. This is attributable to their position in the organizational hierarchy that provides a link between the day-to-day operational activities and strategic decisions made by top executives. In circumstances deemed to be conducive to their activities middle managers have been identified as successfully promoting and selling issues of strategic importance to top tier executives. Middle managers are also able to ensure that they can forge links with external organizations, which in turn provides them with the scope to contribute to strategic decisions. There is also the opportunity to extend research on the limited studies on middle managers and their specific contributions to strategic decisions; this can be supplemented by a comprehensive assessment of their roles in strategic areas of activity (Wooldridge et al., 2008). This also calls for future research that explores the linkages between managerial and collaborative activities and how these impact on the performance of an organization (Wooldridge et al., 2008). The next section explores studies that endorse the strategic practices of middle managers in their efforts to contribute to the strategic decision-making process.

Chapter 2 – Strategic Practices and Middle Managers

2.1 Introduction

This literature review firstly explores the linkages that studies exploring the activities of middle managers have to the concept of strategy as practice. This concept is important as it focuses on the internal micro-activities carried out in organizations. Research studies into strategy of practice also provide a useful framework for exploring the activities of middle managers. In particular, the concept of focusing on the micro activities involved in putting strategy into practice contributes to gaining a greater understanding of how the strategic activities of middle managers use effort to promote their strategic activities upwardly and outwardly.

Consideration is then extended to the involvement of middle managers in strategy exploring their strategic activities and contribution to strategic decision-making. Specific attention is then focused on a key strategic function of middle managers, involving them in selling issues upwardly and outwardly. This firstly considers the concepts of championing ideas and issue -selling and extends this to consider the complexities associated with determining the appropriate time to sell issues. This includes an exploration into the literature that has explored when to alert executives to issues and assessing the appropriate context for selling an issue.

2.2 Associations With the Concept of Strategy as Practice

Strategy as practice is defined as a, ... 'concern with strategy as an activity in organizations, typically the interaction of people, rather than strategy as the property of organizations' (Johnson et al., 2007:3). This perspective views strategy as an undertaking that is carried out by the organization and its multiple actors in favour of the more traditional economic perspective (Jarzabkowski, 2005). Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl (2007) emphasise the importance of including people into strategic decision-making as a restoration of the importance of agency in the development of strategy. They highlight the importance of this shift in endorsing the findings of a number of studies defining the contribution that individuals make to strategic decision-making that have often not been recognised (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Tsoukas and Knudsen, 2002; Whittington, 2003). The traditional marginalization of the actor in strategic activities is attributable to the dominance of macro-economic foundations in mainstream strategy research (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009; Johnson, Melin and Whittington, 2003). Strategy as practice seeks to address this by cultivating studies exploring the micro activities exploring the complex social activity of organizational agency (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009:70).

The strategy as practice perspective also recognises that the creation and replication of strategic activity is linked to the micro-activities of individuals in addition to a purely organizational level of activity (Johnson et al., 2003, 2007; Jarzabkowski 2005, 2008; Whittington 2007). This utilises the argument that traditional perspectives on strategy link this to organizational auspices where each enterprise has its own corporate strategy. However, strategy as practice recognises the importance of the activity of individuals within this process Whittington (2006).

This assertion is also highlighted in a number of other studies (Hambrick, 2004, Jarzabkowski, 2004). Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) have conveniently broken down research studies of strategy as practice into a typology of several areas of research activity. This is extended to specific research studies on strategy as practice undertaken by middle managers in providing a linkage back to the comprehensive review of literature on middle managers outlined in the previous chapter. The strategy of practice perspective can be summarised as an interest in those who undertake strategy. In particular, it is concerned with the micro-level activities of the actors who practice it, what they are doing, how they are doing it, what techniques they are deploying, and how these impact on the formation of strategy (ibid). It is firmly rooted in the social activities of many actors and their ability to draw upon practices to accomplish strategic decision making (ibid).

Research into strategy as practice can also contribute to the development of an in-depth knowledge about how events take place within the work environment. Within this context the outcomes of this activity are often linked to the defined sequences undertaken by practitioners (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009). Outcomes are also sometimes based on a comparison of variances arising from more than one study (Eisenhardt 1989; Tsoukas 1989; Langley 2007). These are often concerned with an examination of the consequences of what strategists do when undertaking different activities of practice including exploring the extent to which variations in mechanical processes can effect a variation in outcomes (Langley 2007).

The concept of strategy as practice can be further broken down into the concepts of praxis, practices and practitioners (Whittington, 2006). Praxis represents the day-to-day flow of strategic activity; practices are the specific events where strategy is undertaken such as meetings or workshops and practitioners are the individuals responsible for carrying out strategy (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). Research that analyses the activities of individual practitioners at the micro-level also tends to define outcomes from the perspective of personal experience. This links strategists to outcomes in accordance with their individual praxis (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009). Whittington (2003) argues that part of the strategy as practice agenda defines how activities undertaken by strategists can help them to be better practitioners. Gaining a deeper awareness of personal variations focusing on their identity, purpose and power within the organization and future career prospects can, therefore, contribute to an understanding on how strategists operate in practice whereas strategy praxis focuses on the link between the activities of the strategists and the outcomes for strategy (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009).

Two issues that are prominent to the research of strategy as practice are concerned with how the micro and macro-phenomena are connected (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009). Too much attention to the micro tends to ignore the fact that strategic decision-making often constitutes local level embedded actions that are influenced by the broader environment (Carter, Clegg and Kornberger, 2008; Chia, 2004; Contu and Willmott 2003). Therefore, the strategy as practice agenda uses practice based research to make connections with the greater macro phenomena (e.g. Johnson et al., 2003, 2007; Whittington 2003, 2006; Jarzabkowski 2004, 2005). This also calls for more strategy as practice studies that can build upon the description of observations

in the field to prove outcomes that arise from empirical research (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009). Traditional strategic management research has produced a large volume of literature associated with performance outcomes and strategy of practice needs to develop a similar approach in order to develop outcomes applicable to strategy as practice research (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2007; Whittington, 2007).

There are a number of research questions that could frame further research into the study of strategy as practice through middle management practices in use (Jarzabkowski, 2004). An exploration of the adoption of a practice in its early adaptive life cycle stage could be compared to the recursive modes adopted later on. Similarly organizations that operate in a fast moving environment could be explored to determine whether or not their adaptive management practices provide an advantage over those operating in a stable environment (ibid).

Three potential areas of research provide the basis for gaining an awareness of the role of actors in the recursive and adaptive use of practices are outlined by (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). Firstly an exploration into who utilises new organizational practices within the stages of the strategy process can define the degree to which the use of a practice is diffused and the impact on the input of actors in interpreting and adapting to this practice. An example of this is the use of meeting as activities pointing to the identification of strategic discussions amongst members of organizations who instinctively utilise recurring sequences to stabilise strategy (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). Secondly the definition and establishment of the

factors that are used by actors to determine whether existing practices are either no longer required or need to be modified can reveal the abilities of an actor in meeting the needs of a particular situation and generating links between micro-use and macro-context. Thirdly defining how new practices arise and become distributed can reveal the development of innovative activities (Jarzabkowski, 2004).

Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) highlight gaps in the study of institutionalized strategy linking these practices to the professional praxis of strategy. Whittington (2006) highlights how strategy as practice research is concerned with the development and dissemination of strategy practices inside and outside of organizations. The origins, spread, legitimisation and influence of strategy practices often draw on institutional methodologies (Whittington 2006). This is supported by a number of leading researchers who have indicated their intent to forge a solid bond between micro-analysis and macro-phenomena (e.g. Jarzabkowski 2004; Johnson et al., 2007; Whittington 2006). Recent theoretical studies have also actively included agency and action into institutional theory (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Oliver 1991).

Jarzabkowski (2004) uses structuration theory related to social order (Giddens, 1984) to offer an explanation to the fact that practice contains many routines. This defines the interaction between agents and socially produced structures occurring as a result of those regulated activities forming day-to-day routinised practices. Structures are defined in this study as the systems that collect human activity and this endorses the social order that is embedded in social institutions (Jarzabkowski, 2004). Practice is

also institutionalised in social structures incorporated into, ... 'day-to-day activities that persist because actors subconsciously choose familiar patterns as it provides 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1984: 64).

Jarzabkowski, Matthiesen and Van de Ven (2009) link Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) research activities into institutional work with a practice approach to institutions and demonstrate the link this has to the strategy of practice approach. In particular, the synergies of both practice-based approaches involve the interaction of actors drawing on common day to day features in constituting practice (ibid). This study highlights a practice approach that is appropriate to the study of institutional work because it focuses upon the actions and interactions of actors in creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions. It also shapes analysis towards the daily activities of actors identifying how institutions drive effort by providing reproductions or modifications (ibid).

The studies into middle managers that are of particular relevance relate to the exploration of the micro praxis of this group of practitioners within the context of their activities. These include Mantere's (2008) research into role expectations and strategic agency; the examination of the sensemaking and sensegiving activities undertaken by Rouleau, (2005) and Balogun and Johnson (2005); Hoon's (2007) research into strategic conversations and Regnér's (2003) study of inductive and deductive strategy making. Research could also be extended to explore the extent to which the adaptive strategy processes being undertaken by middle managers contrast

with the recursive management practices (Jarzabkowski, 2004) inherent in the upper echelons of local authorities.

2.3 Involvement of Middle Managers in Strategy

2.3.1 Contribution to decision-making

Very early research studies started to identify the significance of the strategic activities of middle managers (Burgelman, 1994; Stroh et al., 1996). In particular, Burgelman's (1994) study explores the strategic exit of a major technology organization identifying the benefits of providing middle managers with the opportunity to seize situations where they felt they were able to play a lead role in strategic change. This study highlights how the ability for middle managers to move away from corporate strategy also signalled important changes to the environment (ibid). Early literature also highlights how middle managers play a key role in influencing the implementation of strategy. Guth and Macmillan (1986) identify the tactics of foot dragging and sabotage as deliberate attempts made by middle managers to delay the strategic decision-making process.

Later studies have identified a tendency amongst middle managers to focus on knowledge based on social processes (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007) in order to form strategy. A number of studies also examine middle managers' response to a lack of being assigned a formal strategic role by focusing their attention on the shaping of strategy (Balogun and Johnson, 2004, 2005; Jarzabkowski, et al., 2007; Mantere,

2005; Regnér, 2003; Rouleau, 2005). The limited studies on middle managers and their key role in organizational competitiveness and sustainability provides scope for further research (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007).

Studies have also established that the greater deployment of middle managers in strategic decision-making has emerged because contemporary organizations have fewer tiers of management facilitating a combined organizational activity (Floyd and Wooldridge 1997). This situation has created greater sharing of experiences and expertise (Johnson and Huff 1998) and has caused centres of expertise to associate more closely (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Middle managers have also been identified for their effectiveness in innovating strategic activities to improved organizational competitiveness in periods of unforeseen change (Nonaka 1994). In highly competitive environments greater cohesion between managerial levels and the organizational hierarchy (Floyd and Lane 2000) has contributed to enhance strategic renewal (Jarzabkowski, 2004).

Balogun and Johnson's (2005) exploration into the way middle managers implement strategic changes in response to a regulatory change contributes to the research gap identifying the need for a greater understanding on the micro social processes that influence strategic decision-making. This study also provides an insight into the functions played by groups of actors besides top executives who have the capacity to develop strategy. In particular, the focus of this research on how middle managers interpret top down strategic decisions also identifies their ability to affect organizational change. This is achieved through middle managers exerting influence in response to change plans that have been initiated by top executives (ibid). This

demonstrates how previous successful attempts to implement strategy cannot be guaranteed by top tier executives because of the presence of the informal lateral processes that were also taking place (ibid). This study also recognises that this does not provide a definitive approach to the understanding of the complexities of the interaction processes (ibid) and that there is scope for these to differ in situations where other types of change were taking place and if other recipients of change are involved. This study also contributes to the body of knowledge (see also Balogun and Johnson, 2004; Rouleau, 2005) on how middle managers are able to achieve strategic organizational change. This also identifies a requirement for further research, which builds upon these activities together with further explorations in how the social interactions of middle managers are undertaken at institutional levels of activity (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007).

Literature associating middle managers with strategy includes research highlighting their ability to make adverse interventions. Meyer (2006) defines the self interests of middle managers at individual and group level that ultimately cause them to intervene destructively. Similarly Sillince and Mueller (2007) explore a group of middle managers with the responsibility for implementing strategy that re-defines these objectives in their favour because of the absence of clear top management direction. Kuratko and Goldsby (2004) also determine how middle managers can adversely influence the implementation of strategy. Marginson (2002) explores the way middle managers respond to the corporate strategy that is being introduced into an organization with the introduction of Management Control Systems (MCS). This study demonstrates the way middle managers can determine a response to strategic activity. This provides an important insight into how the behaviour of middle

managers in accordance with their perception of their role within the organization which is designed and shaped by administrative systems (ibid). This study identifies how middle managers are given the responsibility for implementing MCS enabling them to manipulate this in order to influence the strategic direction of the organization (Wooldridge et al., 2008). The way middle managers are able to control the implementation of strategy is also demonstrated in Boyett and Currie's (2004) research into how middle managers in an Irish telecommunications firm while not succeeding in implementing the corporate goals as expected nonetheless set up a new strategy that was adopted by the Jamaican firm they were working for.

Laine and Vaara's (2006) study of middle managers within an engineering consulting group identifies how conversations specifically related to the work area of middle managers provides them with a bargaining position in situations where they are not in agreement with corporate management strategy. This is focused on a discourse to legitimise actions appearing to contradict official corporate strategy (ibid). Balogun and Johnson's (2004) exploration into the strategic activities of middle managers during a major restructuring exercise of a recently privatised utility identifies them influencing change in the absence of top executives. It identifies how the importance of experimenting when there is not a clearly disseminated vision on how to operationalise a new structure (ibid). This study also contributes to knowledge on how middle managers are able to react to strategic change in the absence of the involvement of top tier executives (ibid).

The extent to which expectations on the role of middle manager is influenced by their ability to operate strategically is explored by Mantere (2008). This study

comprises an extensive number of interviews with middle managers from 12 organizations was associated with a wider research project on the enactment of strategy in wider work activities (ibid). A key finding conceives a definition of strategic activity as the capacity to exert a substantial impact on a middle manager's own work relating to issues that these individual consider to be of benefit to their organization (ibid). This study also identifies the factors that fundamentally impede middle managers to act strategically as being linked to uncertainties concerning whether or not their strategic decision-making is in tune with the requirements of top tier executives (ibid). This study defines the importance for middle managers to establish the expectations of top tier executives and how these should be agreed and understood to encourage their strategic involvement by avoiding possible role conflict (Wooldridge, et al., 2008). The findings from this research also provide an insight into the way middle managers understand their strategic position in identifying the strategy practices that influence middle managers when deciding to go beyond their daily responsibilities to influence strategy (Mantere, 2008). As the opportunities to enable middle managers to operate strategically are reliant on the extent to which organization encourages and engenders this activity, interventions to facilitate this should be encouraged. This includes cultivating situations that encourage them to operate in a competitive environment to engender their contribution to organizational strategy (ibid).

The absence of research into the project team activities of middle managers (Wooldridge, et al., 2008) provides scope for further studies in this area. This could build upon previous literature on the activity of teams and their ability to impact on the outcome for the organization (Rouleau, 2005; Westley, 1990). The potential for

middle managers to influence strategy could therefore be linked to an investigation of their association with the strategic activities within groups (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Johnson et al., 2007). This would, therefore, contribute to calls for future studies to cultivate the development of a finer-grained comprehension of sources governing influences on strategy (Wooldridge et al., 2008).

2.3.2 Exploring strategic activities

A number of studies that explore the strategic activities of middle managers have applied the concept of sensemaking and sensegiving as a means for identifying the finer grained aspects of strategic activity. Sensemaking explores how middle managers reorganise and utilise their intuition to disseminate change to others. This focuses on the discourse used by middle managers to link strategy to external actors and this attaches importance to the social situation as well as the objectives of the organization (Balogun and Johnson, 2005; Regner, 2003; Rouleau, 2005).

Sensegiving involves elucidating a new vision in order to persuade actors in organization to accept and implement this (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Rouleau, 2005). Three studies have been chosen to identify how sensemaking and sensegiving has been applied to research into the strategic practices of middle managers.

Firstly, Rouleau's (2005) study into the activities and interactions of middle managers identifies the effective implementation of strategic change within a top quality clothing organization. This study demonstrates how the micro processes of

sensemaking and sensegiving are utilised to identify how daily activities are embedded within the intuitive awareness of middle managers (Rouleau, 2005). Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) highlight how this study demonstrates that both middle managers are observed to deploy a number of regular activities and discussions that successfully bring a new product onto the market. Rouleau (2005) highlights the fact that the results of this study contribute to that unravelling of the intricacies of strategic sensemaking and sensegiving that enhance the abilities of middle managers to promote change. This study recommends how organizations should acknowledge the intuition that middle managers can contribute to the effective implementation of strategic change.

Secondly Balogun and Johnson's (2005) exploration into how middle managers implement strategic changes devised by top executives in response to a regulatory change utilises the concept of sensemaking. This is utilised to explore how middle managers gain an understanding of how to respond to change processes through, ... 'their everyday experiences and behaviours of others, and the stories, gossip, jokes, conversations and discussions they share with their peers about these experiences, shape their interpretations of what they should be doing.' (Balogun and Johnson, 2005: 1574). Strategic changes exerted from the top tier are then put into practice through social exchanges that creates an activity that lacks predictability (Balogun and Johnson, 2005). This study identifies sensemaking as social processes that influence outcomes of implementation and contribute to the unpredictable nature of change (Balogun and Johnson, 2005). These processes lead to perceptions of change that implement and fuse intentional and unintentional concepts (Balogun and Johnson, 2005). Change outcomes arise from vertical processes issued by top

managers and the lateral processes of middle managers where most of the sensemaking activities taking place and is unforeseen by top executives.

Thirdly Regnér (2003) utilises the concept of sensemaking to explore the way managers create strategy through micro-level processes that are undertaken when developing strategy. The study highlights how the identification of sensemaking and knowledge structures includes experimentation on a trial and error basis and those inductive processes allow exploration essential to developing and progressing strategies (Regnér, 2003). Strategy creation therefore emerges from day-to-day processes and Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) highlight how in contrast other actors could undertake exploratory practices allowing them to conceptualise prospective changes to strategy identifying the identification of opportunities for innovation and how this can impact on organizational outcomes.

The three studies demonstrate how sensemaking is an effective tool in assisting middle managers to participate in strategic activities. These activities are also complemented by sensegiving in their activities of interpreting and selling strategic change (Rouleau, 2005.) The activities of sensemaking are predominantly involved with the fine grained activities associated with interpreting and implementing strategy within organizations. Therefore, the appropriateness of sensemaking as a lens for exploring the proactive efforts of middle managers in drawing issues to the attention of top managers is less appropriate as a method for exploring these activities. In particular, sensemaking is a cognitive activity and as such it is lacking as a means of exploring activities that require attention to be devoted to structure.

Although sensegiving complements sensemaking by providing the opportunity to share change with others this generally remains in the domain of top tier managers and its value in enabling middle managers to sustain change in a competitive environment is unproven (ibid). When middle managers use sensemaking and sensegiving it has also been observed that they are reliant on their tacit knowledge of well established procedures (ibid) rather than being purposeful in exerting effort to influence corporate strategy. Furthermore, sensegiving has limitations in proving whether or not attempts to enact a change in attitude actually takes place as there are difficulties in proving conclusively what has actually made a difference to both cognitive and behavioural shifts (Foldy, Goldman and Ospina, 2008). The next section considers how middle managers become involved with the strategic priorities of top executives and highlights the differences between this activity and the downward activity of implementing strategy.

2.3.3 Contributing to strategic priorities

Research studies exploring the concept that middle managers are able to provide a contribution to corporate strategy commenced with a number of key studies (Burgelman, 1983; Kanter, 1982; Mintzberg, 1985). These identify functions associated with middle managers and corporate strategy that define opportunities, foster initiatives and renew the capability of an organization (Wooldridge et al., 2008). This highlights the essential function of middle level managers in initiating situations where they can exploit their position within the organizational hierarchy to

Wooldridge and Floyd's (1990) exploration into the strategic involvement of middle managers in 20 organizations identifies the important contribution that link middle managers to the strategic priorities of top tier executives. Accordingly middle managers that are fully involved in strategy can also query the decision-making process of top managers (ibid). Westley's (1990) research into the strategic role of middle managers in organizations reveals how being kept out of the strategic decision-making process led to their disinclination to implement new strategy. However, this study also identifies the willingness of middle managers to contribute to this process improves when they are actively engaged in strategy (ibid). Floyd and Wooldridge (1992) establish how middle managers are able to make a significant contribution to emerging strategic decisions in addition to top tier executives and there are instances where they can even improve the quality of this process. This study also highlights the importance of the championing role of the middle manager in identifying market opportunities.

Middle managers who can develop an effective relationship with their top executives in locating and creating new situations have also been identified as being able to enhance the future viability of an organization (Floyd and Wooldridge 1999). This is achieved by developing an environment that enables them to facilitate their strategic capability (Hornsby, Kuratko, and Zahra, 2002; Kuratko, Ireland, Covin and Hornsby, 2005). These studies identify that when middle managers are encouraged to become involved in strategic decision-making their behaviour has a significant influence on future organizational success. A key contribution that middle managers are able to provide is their ability to assimilate knowledge from lower level managers and formulate this into project ideas to top tier executives. The

majority of new ideas are produced by middle managers enable them to be in a favourable position to refer the ones worthy of further development to top executives for consideration and evaluation (Hornsby et al., 2002). This study also identifies how the closeness of middle managers to the operational side enables them to develop and inform input into strategic decisions. Top executives are also recommended to create an environment where conditions provide the opportunity for middle managers to contribute to the decision-making process (ibid).

Hoon (2007) provides an example of how significant strategic change in the professional administrative service of a German university defines the interaction between middle managers and top executives responsible for devising overarching strategies. This study explores how top tier executives and middle managers interact with each other through a series of formal strategic decision-making activities. However, the particular focus of this study highlights how strategic decisions are made within the environment of formal committee meetings (ibid). Specific attention is paid to how top managers and middle managers interact with each other at formal meetings and the importance of the informal interactions emerging outside this formality (ibid). This study highlights the significance of these associations in providing an opportunity for middle managers to bring their ideas to the attention of top tier executives. It is argued that the likelihood that the proposals of middle managers can influence future strategic activities is increased through informal interventions.

These findings establish that despite the fact that formal strategic conventions between top tier executives and middle managers remain embedded in the formal

committee structure these also provide a forum for a number of informal conversations to take place behind-the-scenes (Hoon, 2007). The importance of these conversations provides the scope for middle managers to influence the future strategy formulation process (ibid). These interactions help middle managers determine the attitude of top tier executives towards potential initiatives of strategic importance. Informal conversations form a pre-cursor to future formal strategic discussions while the committee provides the environment for formal strategic approval. In particular, the reshaping of strategic proposals is likely to take place during informal conversations on strategy and not within the formal committees. Nonetheless these informal conversations also provide an informal environment for legitimising future strategic initiatives. This study reveals how the informal process is just as important as the formal interactions unveiling the political elements that underpin strategic activity. These back stage discussions therefore serve to shape the future front stage strategic decisions (ibid).

Informal strategic conversations provide middle managers with an opportunity for middle managers to draw the attention of top executives to future strategic issues the informal strategic conversation, therefore, provides the opportunity for fostering an awareness of the new issue (Hoon, 2007). Strategic conversations have been identified as a softer tactic to issue-selling (Dutton and Ashford, 1993, Dutton et al., 2001) that is used to gauge whether or not top tier executives are aligned to the issue (Hoon, 2007). Where there is commitment this provides an endorsement for middle managers to work on building the idea into a strategic proposal. Strategic conversations are, therefore, very important to the micro processes of strategizing and setting the frame for strategic activity (Hoon, 2007). This research is useful in

revealing the importance of committees as common administrative activities within the public-sector. It also highlights the requirement for more research into how middle and upper levels of management formulate strategy together through the activity of informal conversations (ibid).

The relationship that middle managers are able to develop with top executives illustrates how this association is beneficial for corporate decision-making and organizational performance (Wooldridge et al., 2008). This has also previously been demonstrated in a small number of studies. This provides scope for the development of more research in support of the extent to which middle managers are able to shape top executives' perceptions towards strategy and the extent to which these efforts can benefit organizational purposes. This can also provide a contribution to current limited research on the extent to which middle managers are able to succeed in their endeavours to change top-tier executives' perception of strategy (Ling, Floyd and Baldrige, 2005).

2.4 Selling Issues Upwards and Outwards

2.4.1 Championing and issue-selling

Academic literature has identified a pivotal role that middle managers perform is to bring strategic initiatives to the attention of top executives. Wooldridge and Floyd (1990) outline how middle managers exert an influence over strategy by either intervening in the improvement of the quality of decision-making or increasing the efficiency of implementation. The importance of the findings from this study draws

attention to the contribution that middle managers can provide to the quality of strategic decision-making as interventions that result in effective implementation. This study also defines a direct relationship between the activities of middle managers in participating in strategic decision-making through a deeper understanding of organizational activities (ibid).

Floyd and Wooldridge's (1992) survey based quantitative study provides an important insight into the four key roles performed by middle managers that are associated with organizational strategy. The first two functions of implementing and facilitating strategy involve their downward engagement with the general workforce. The last two activities involve synthesising and championing and are associated with strategic upward activities towards their associations with top tier executives. The activity of championing is particularly important as it provides the opportunity for middle managers to influence and reshape the strategic decisions of top tier executives (ibid). Championing has also been identified as providing middle managers with the scope to re define the strategic decision-making process of top executives (Wooldridge et al., 2008).

Mantere's (2005) research into middle managers as strategic champions defines strategic practices that can either enable or disable the championing activities of middle managers. In this study champions are defined as actors who try to influence strategic issues that are greater than their immediate duties (ibid). This study identifies that the practice of strategy and the extent to which it enables or disables strategic activity. It systematically compares the practices of different middle managers to define how these differences can restrain or encourage their ability to

influence strategic decisions (ibid). This study also highlights the motivations causing middle managers to endorse strategy (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009). The importance of the championing role provides more scope for the function of middle managers within their working environment including job enrichment, feelings of power and purpose, capacity for influence and personal advancement (Mantere, 2005).

While championing provides a definition of the vital role middle managers play in promoting strategic issues upwardly Dutton and Ashford's (1993) concept of issue-selling provides an in-depth insight into the way middle managers broker strategic initiatives with top executives. An issue is defined as becoming strategic when top executives identify its importance for the performance of the organization (ibid). Strategic performance is also enhanced by effective middle managers that engage in issue-selling by bringing items of strategic importance to the attention of top executives (ibid). During initial discussions this activity typically involves the middle manager in defining the strategic issues that are of importance and defining the areas of activity to concentrate on when seeking to sell these upwardly. The benefits of involving middle-level managers in the strategic issue identification process and exposing top tier executives to the concerns of the operational side of the business are also advocated in this study (ibid).

The concept of issue-selling is subsequently extended to consider middle managers' involvement in influencing strategic decision-making as they determine what would provide the best opportunity to bring these to the attention of top tier executives (Dutton et al., 1997). Effectiveness in this process also relies on middle managers

who are able to link the strategic issues they wish to sell issue to an important strategic target; this typically includes involving a number of executives at the onset and being intuitive about when to promote their issues (Dutton et al., 2001). Ling et al., (2005) highlight how middle managers determine the appropriate issue-selling strategy involving how they should present this, what should be the appropriate channel for presentation, who should be involved and what conventions need to be observed. Currie and Proctor's (2005) study provides an identification of the strategic activities performed by middle managers as they influence top executives in alerting them to the new activities of strategic significance in order to affect a shift in current thinking.

Previous research also identifies that the activity of selling of issues needs to be undertaken with an awareness of the conflict that can occur between attempting to do whatever it takes to sign up top management's commitment and appearing over enthusiastic (Wooldridge et al., 2008). This accounts for the fact that issue-selling is more successful if it is undertaken by those who believe that they are able to obtain the support of top tier management (Dutton and Ashford 1993). Middle managers have been identified as being more effective if they sell issues at the beginning of the activity and follow this up with updates and exploit opportunities that continue to promote the issue (Hornsby et al., 2002).

The literature exploring the strategic activities of middle managers has significantly raised awareness yet the impact of this activity remains very loosely defined. A key reason for this is because research to date tends to employ terminology that is not sufficiently explicit (Wooldridge et al., 2008). In particular, Dutton and Ashford's

(1993) concept of issue-selling can be associated with Floyd and Wooldridge's (1992) concept of synthesising but it also includes elements of championing defined in the same study. Similarly Rouleau's (2005) study into the interpretation and selling of change has been identified as having overlaps with both the synthesising and implementing activities originally highlighted in Floyd and Wooldridge's (1992) earlier study. The lack of coherence in terminology is also preventing the build-up of a body of knowledge that can clearly identify the role that middle managers perform in upwardly influencing strategic decision-making (Wooldridge et al., 2008). This provides the opportunity for further research that can develop a logical and coherently defined strategic role for middle managers. It can also draw a clear distinction between the importance of other actors in the strategic decision-making process and the large body of theoretical literature defining the strategic activities of top executives (ibid). Future areas of research could explore activities ensuring that the theoretical distinctions between top executives and middle managers allow coherence in comparability across research studies (ibid). Notwithstanding the fact that inconsistencies are common in management research (Hitt, Beamish, Jackson and Mathieu, 2007) this would contribute to the development of a library of literature that could be used consistently to explore the contribution that middle managers are-making to the strategic decision-making process (Wooldridge et al., 2008). This can contribute to research that is aimed at clearly defining the activities of middle managers in contributing upwardly to strategic decision-making.

2.4.2 Paying attention to executives as the target

Dutton et al., (1997) define the importance for middle managers in choosing where and how to bring strategic issues to the attention of top managers' attention. This study also emphasises that this situation is impacted by the complexity of middle managers existing in a marketplace for issues that compete for top management's time and attention. More recent research has considered this concept within the context of decentralised organizations providing the opportunity for middle managers to take more initiatives in strategic decisions and planning processes (Andersen, 2004). Other literature has defined the interaction between top executives and middle managers as playing a key role in effective strategy formulation and implementation (Raes et al., 2011). Rouleau and Balogun, (2011) also highlight the importance of middle managers in embarking on conversations with top tier executives to secure their attention and increase the likelihood of gaining their support and investment.

Previous studies have also considered the thought processes associated in deciding whether or not to sell issues to top management. These include associating issue-selling behaviours to provide a link their link to strategic outcomes (Dutton et al., 1997). This also involves managers enacting a series of manoeuvres to bring about successful issue-selling (Dutton et al., 2001). Middle managers also operate in an environment where competing forces simultaneously open up and close down action initiatives (Dutton et al., 1997). The willingness of top executives to listen to the issues being proposed by middle managers is identified as creating the most conducive conditions for issue-selling (ibid). Ling et al., (2005) extend this finding by identifying how middle managers look for signals from top executives enabling them to tailor the way they can sell issues. The extent to which top executives have

developed a culture enabling actors to speak up, therefore, governs the extent to which they feel encouraged to sell issues (Miliken et al., 2003). Previous research has identified how issue-selling attempts can be discontinued if they are associated with uncertainty and negative consequences (Dutton et al., 1997).

Previous research has encouraged top executives to create occasional forums for selling untested or new ideas in order to influence the origin and extent of issues being sold to them in conjunction with increasing their exposure to certain groups to increase the likelihood of issue-selling (Dutton et al., 1997). Middle managers who not only know top management but also have rapport with them have the extra advantage of securing a hearing for their issue and also benefit from being able to gauge their initial reactions (ibid).

2.4.3 Assessing organizational factors

The concept of issue-selling is also contextualized within organizational factors that are either conducive or cause adversity to the activity of issue-selling. Firstly, external challenges facing the organization such as economic or competitive factors can create conducive conditions. Secondly, challenges posed by changes in the organization can be conducive to raising awareness and gaining the attention of executives to issues. Thirdly, the culture of the organization can either create favourable or unfavourable conditions for selling issues (Dutton et al., 1997).

These situations create the need for middle managers to determine when would be the best time to embark on the selling of issues and the factors that influence this has

led to subsequent research that has extended this debate (Dutton et al., 1997). This highlights how the identification of issues that middle managers intend to sell commences with the detection of strategic issues focussing on and gathering resources to support these (ibid). This concept has been subsequently utilised in Marginson's (2002) exploration into how the efforts of middle managers resulted in changes to the multiple measures introduced by top managers to assess performance to the more easily understood prioritised single measures.

The identification of a correlation between the favourable and unfavourable conditions for selling issues and the level of activity of activity enacted by middle managers is a key factor for consideration (Dutton et al., 1997). The factors creating favourable and unfavourable conditions also have associations with the political environment affecting a number of middle managers within their organizational context (ibid). Currie and Proctor's (2005) study highlights how unfavourable conditions can be created by a lack of clarity in expectations from top executives, causing middle managers to be uncertain about the expectations of a new role. This identifies how the selling of issues by middle managers also improves when they perceive it only benefits the organization, highlighting the importance of role satisfaction in this activity (De Clerq et al., 2011).

Organizations that face competitive and economic pressures also intensify the positive conditions for issue-selling. This is attributable to possible losses from not being proactive that encourage middle managers to be more risky (Dutton et al., 1997). This concept is subsequently extended by Barnett (2008) in defining how managers take advantage of activities in order to create value for the organization.

The importance for middle managers to assess the context when making decisions on whether or not it is appropriate or not to sell an issue is highlighted by Dutton et al., (1997). This has subsequently been explored in later literature, in identifying how managers continuously contemplate a variety of options when selling issues within their work portfolio (Barnett, 2008). It is also highlighted by the way middle managers pay specific attention to the extent to which the environment is conducive prior to proceeding to the stage of issue-selling (Dutton et al., 1997). In particular, potential issue sellers are involved in assessing the attributes of top executives when considering a context's favourability for issue-selling based on the personal stakes that are likely to be involved prior to issue-selling (ibid). This concept has been further considered to identify the circumstances that make this possible. While middle managers might produce ideas that they want to sell as issues these are not necessarily deployed unless the conditions are conducive for them to be accepted (Baer, 2012). In turn this situation is influenced by how the organizational culture provides middle managers with the motivation embark on issue-selling. The activities of middle managers are also governed by the efforts to develop effective relationships with influential stakeholders to enhance their ability assess organizational factors (ibid).

2.4.4 Gauging the situation

Middle managers are influenced by the extent to which their belief in the ability to sell an issue is likely to be successful (Dutton et al., 1997). This concept follows the assumption that individuals exert more effort to sell issues when they are perceived as having a greater likelihood of being successful (ibid). More recent literature

defines how the ability to sell issues is likely to increase over time as middle managers gain more competence when engaging in this activity (Howard – Grenville, 2007). Key to this activity is how middle managers can read the context of the situation through dynamic and fluid processes... ‘Just like the sailor who is assessing when to set sail in a choppy sea, middle managers make ongoing appraisals of whether the context signals a ‘go’ or ‘no go’ for selling an issue’ (Dutton et al., 1997:415).

This concept is later extended to consider issues selling as a political process operating within the prevailing organizational context (Dutton et al., 2001). More recent studies have linked this to the extent to which middle managers engage in risk-taking (Morrison, 2006). Middle managers have also been identified as being restrained from putting ideas forward because the prevailing conditions suggest that this would be the best course of action (Liang, Farh and Farh, (2012).

Circumstances that cause middle managers to hold back on selling issues have been linked to an insufficiently developed relationship with top executives (Dutton et al., 1997). This highlights how middle managers are sensitive to complex clues and their issue-selling is underpinned by activities of impression-management and appraisal (ibid). This also emphasises a need to attend to factors that would indicate that the outcome would either be favourable or unfavourable (ibid).

More recent research identifies the need to recognise how managers of different cultures will be at variance with their perception of contextual factors and this will impact on how they decide to engage in issue-selling (Ling et al., 2005). A crucial

factor guiding this process is developing an ability to, ... 'get a sense of when the winds are likely to change' (Dutton et al., 1997:416). Middle managers are also adept at paying attention to changes taking place inside and outside the organization as indicators as to whether or not it would be appropriate to engage in issue-selling (ibid). This is identified in the following concept: ... 'Just like a seismograph which detects the earth's rumblings, managers who are alert to the winds of change in conditions may see more opportunities for issue-selling' (Dutton et al., 1997: 420).

Another important factor influencing whether or not middle managers are likely to engage in issue-selling is the extent to which they feel that they are risking their image within the organization (Dutton et al., 1997). In particular, taking risks that are associated with being perceived as violating the norms of the organization are perceived as being the most risky and stepping outside the confines of normal arrangements is perceived as being the most risky (ibid). Examples of these activities include attempting to sell an issue to a top executive who has previously turned an issue down or not having a sufficiency of data to support their attempts to sell an issue (ibid). The requirement of conforming to norms is evidenced by their sense that selling issues without data to back up the benefits which can be perceived as creating an image of risk (ibid). More recent literature has identified how the fear of being viewed negatively or to be damaging vital relationships causes people to restrain from issue-selling (Miliken et al, 2003). This has also been identified as middle managers avoiding embarking on issue-selling if this is perceived as an activity that causes destruction to their relationships with top executives (Barnett, 2008).

2.5 Conclusion

It is evident from the literature that the strategic practices of middle managers make a significant contribute to the strategic direction of contemporary organizations. Strategy as practice is an important tool for identifying the strategic activities of middle managers and in highlighting the contributions that individuals make to strategic decision-making. It is also applicable to studies that focus on an exploration of actors and their interactions and practices within socially defined structures. Explorations into the micro-practices of middle managers have been explored in Regnér's (2003) study of inductive and deductive strategy making, Hoon's (2007) research into strategic conversations and Mantere's (2005) research into role expectations and strategic agency. Middle managers' previous involvement in strategy has been well covered in previous studies that have tended to focus on the contribution to strategic decision-making and specific strategic activities associated with bringing items of strategic importance to the attention of executives responsible for devising strategy.

The strategic activities of middle managers associated with selling issues warrants specific attention. Commencing with Floyd and Wooldridge's (1992) concept of championing ideas and Dutton and Ashford's (1993) concept of issue-selling, it is possible to identify how these initial concepts have been extended in subsequent academic literature. The concept of championing has been extended by Mantere (2005) to conceive this activity within the context of the organizational conditions that either enable or disable middle managers to engage in this activity.

Middle managers' involvement in issue-selling is extended to consider the factors that enable middle managers to assess whether or not conditions are conducive for issue-selling. This is embodied in the concept of reading the wind (Dutton et al., 1997). Involving a determination where middle managers focus on executives as the target, reacting to external pressures and organizational change together with the prevailing culture of their organization. These activities have also been extended in a number of more recent studies.

A number of studies have highlighted sensemaking as providing an interpretation to a range of strategic activities carried out by managers. However, it is suggested that within the context of this thesis the purposeful activities of issue-selling should be considered through the lens of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). This perspective is defined as, 'the purposive action of actors and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions' (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). This also provides the opportunity to pay particular attention to structural considerations that are associated with middle managers operating with the environment of the public-sector agencies of local authorities.

Chapter 3 – Strategy as Institutional Work

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on a review of literature associated with institutional work. The scope for applying this concept marks a shift from keeping institutional theory mainly within the realms of academia through endeavours to bring this perspective to the attention of organizational managers (Lawrence et al., 2009). This literature review will explore the suitability of applying institutional work to strategy within the concept that by observing this shift in focus towards practical efforts of actors with respect to institutions assisting with the translation of institutional concepts towards non-academic discussions (ibid). This is underpinned by Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) framework linking dissociated studies into institutional work and a preliminary taxonomy to enable further research into these activities.

This literature review firstly considers institutional theory and explores the linkages between the concept of institutional pillars and institutional work. The practical application of institutional work is then considered within the context of actors and institutions within the context of their ability to create, maintain and disrupt institutions. Consideration is then given to the application of institutional work within practical organizational situations and the future directions for this concept.

Institutional theory is a perspective that makes a significant contribution to the study of contemporary organizations (Lawrence et al., 2009). An institution is defined as

the, ... 'more or less taken for granted behaviour that is underpinned by normative systems and cognitive understanding that give meaning to social exchange and thus enable self-reproducing social order' (Greenwood et al., 2008:4). The institutional perspective, therefore, frames the studying of organizations within the, ... 'idea that there are enduring elements of social life – institutions – that have a profound effect on the thoughts feelings and behaviour of individual and collective actors' (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:216). Institutions are commonly studied at organizational or field level. Institutions also lead to a reduction in uncertainties in the environment through enacting behaviours that mark the standards expected for a legitimate environment (Zietsma and McKnight).

Institutions comprise rules and laws and practices that are commonly accepted (Zietsma and McKnight, 2009). Examples of institutions within an organization are, ... 'the use of informal accounting controls, particular structures and impersonal personnel practices' (Greenwood et al., 2008: 5). Examples of field-level institutions embrace a wider examination of, ... 'hierarchies of status between categories of occupations or between organizations that affect hiring patterns and alliances' (Greenwood et al., 2008: 5).

3.2 Institutional Theory

3.2.1 Early perspectives

Early institutional theorists framed the concept of institutionalisation as the point where social activities became rules (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This concept was then extended to consider the concepts of isomorphism where:

‘Coercive isomorphism occurs because organizations are motivated to avoid sanctions available to organizations on which they are dependent. Normative isomorphism occurs because organizations are motivated to respect social obligations. And mimetic isomorphism occurs because organizations are motivated by their interpretation of others successful behaviours.’ (Greenwood et al., 2008:7).

DiMaggio and Powell’s seminal study (1983) outlines a ‘highly structured organizational field provides a context in which individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead in the aggregate to homogeneity in structure, culture and output’ (ibid 1983:147) defining ‘coercive’, ‘mimetic’ and ‘normative’ processes that cause organizations operating in a given field to be similar (ibid).

Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge (2009) have subsequently applied this concept of isomorphism to the contemporary public-sector in the UK in identifying attributes of organizations that might be subject to these pressures. This study establishes detailed appraisal of change in terms of the characteristics of an organization and their likelihood of conforming to institutional pressures (Ashworth et al., 2009). This study identifies coercive pressures with the Local Government Act, 1999 in the

form of a mandatory requirement for local authorities to review their functions and monitor their performance through the setting of targets. Mimetic pressures are associated with councils being encouraged to form benchmarking clubs in support of the performance agenda introduced by central government. The creation of a “Beacon Council” scheme to acknowledge the councils who were demonstrating the highest performance also endorses the practical application of this process (ibid). Normative processes associated with local authority performance are highlighted by the finding that, ... ‘the impact of management on performance may be mediated by the weight of institutional norms’ (Ashworth et al., 2009: 184). Lawrence et al., (2011) suggest that an institutional approach provides an excellent insight into the way organizations operate in practice and relate to other organizations.

3.2.2 Institutional pillars

Institutional pillars (Scott, 1995) are identified as being very important to institutional theory because they bring together the disparate aspects of its various concepts by making a distinction on the characteristics underpinning institutions defining these as ‘regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive ‘pillars’ (Greenwood et al., 2008:15). In practice emphasis on institutional pillars has been selective although the original intended application was for researchers to be specific on which pillar was in operation and to define the specific context (ibid).

Institutional pillars define, ... 'cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour' (Scott, 1995:33). Operating at many layers of authority institutions has been observed to permeate culture, routines and structure (ibid).

The regulatory pillar is characterised by, ... 'explicit regulative processes – rule setting, monitoring and sanctioning activities' (Scott 1995: 35). An example of the application of this is provided in Zietsma and McKnight's (2009) longitudinal study of the British Columbian (BC) coastal forest industry between 1992 and 2006. This research highlights how sponsors were able to gain support to their activities by using coercive mechanisms including exerting monitoring pressures and applying sanctions.

The cultural-cognitive pillar, ... 'stresses the central role played by the socially mediated construction of a common framework of meaning' (Scott, 1995: 45). This also has associations with activities that are taken for granted within organizations because they are easily understood routines and procedures (Zietsma and McKnight, 2009). A practical application of the is identified in this study through the depiction of the British Columbian (BC) coastal forest industry as an illustration of how the involvement of multiple stakeholders is justified on the basis that the public should participate in decision-making processes on public owned land (ibid).

The normative pillar represents, ... 'normative rules that introduce a prescriptive, evaluative and obligatory dimension into social life' (Scott, 1995: 37). These are representative of obligation and standards that are accepted as moral obligations (ibid). An example of the application of normative activities is a campaign that deliberately demonizes destroying BC forests through skilful advertising (Zietsma and McKnight, 2009). In this example the activity was able to achieve the support from the public and a number of organizations to use sustainably harvested wood (ibid).

Processes causing institutions to emerge and then subsequently be maintained emphasises the importance of the concept of institutional pillars as 'regulative, normative or cognitive systems' (Scott: 1995: 89). This provides a good illustration on how institutions work and persist through the continual effort of actors in being purposeful in engaging in activities that will ensure that structures are maintained and do not disappear (Scott 1995: 90).

The next section considers how Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) concept of institutional work has provided the basis for considering the institutional pillars within a recognised theoretical framework. In particular, these studies emphasise important to emphasise the benefits of drawing on, ... 'Scott's three pillars of institutionalization to point to a variety of kinds of effort associated with institutional work' (Lawrence, et al., 2009:15).

3.3 Institutional Work

3.3.1 Context within institutional theory

As institutional theory is characterised by tensions that exist between agency and structure (Battilana and D'Aunno 2009) this needs specific consideration within the context of institutional work. Structure has been defined as both a product and a constraint on human action and it is this duality of structure that can be applied to institutions (ibid). It is argued that actors' environments determine their responses to situations they encounter in the external world. However, there is also little scope for human agency where the constraints that shape behaviours in organizations also provide organizations with their overall stability (ibid). Within the context of institutional work structures do not place constraints on human agency but instead it provides the opportunity to engender their creative and innovative capacities (ibid). This endorses the concept that formal structures both enable and constrain organizational behaviour. (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Institutional work as an emerging conception has benefitted from a few articles which merit further study (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). These include the important articles by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) in providing a framework for the new institutionalism in organization studies. New institutions have often arisen because institutional entrepreneurs have been provided with resources that enable them to enact highly valued interests (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Institutional entrepreneurship (Di Maggio, 1988), therefore, provides the conditions for institutional change and innovation paying attention to the role of actors and agency with the ability to affect institutions (Lawrence et al., 2009). However, the ability for institutional entrepreneurs to exert agency also pays

attention to their embeddedness within the organization. This defines associations with the concept of the paradox of embedded agency (Seo and Creed, 2002). This concept is also important in emphasising the extent to which embedded actors are able to display agency (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009). However, this research also identifies a multi-dimensional approach to agency that is not constant and varies depending on the context in which individuals are embedded (ibid).

DiMaggio (1988) explores the association between agency and institutional theory defining the concept of institutional entrepreneurship in providing an insight into how new institutions arise. This has also been observed as moving attention towards actors and agency and their impact on institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Institutional entrepreneurship also concentrates on how actors use their influence to change institutions through strategies relating to their leadership in technical and market arenas or by achieving changes to regulations through their lobbying activities (Hoffman, 1999; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Maguire, Hardy and Lawrence, 2004; Rao, Morrill and Zald, 2000). More importantly this provides an insight into how the direct practices employed by individuals create new institutions. Taking this idea forward Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) emphasise how the practices associated with creating new institutions can be extended beyond the narrow focus of powerful institutional entrepreneurs to actors performing day to day activities. This identifies the value of the greater number of actors who are engaged institutional work that occupy positions in an organization that provide a supporting or facilitating role (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Leblebici, Salancik, Copay and King, 1991).

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) also draw specific attention to Oliver's (1991) discussion of strategic responses to institutional processes, and her account of deinstitutionalization as key studies. This earlier literature places a great deal of emphasis on agency as an integral part of the institutional work perspective. It also provides guidance on the methods that can be employed by organizations that are challenged by pressures from institutions and also draws attention to a gap in institutional research at that time highlighting the way an organizations strategic activity is often in response to institutions that impact on this activity (ibid). This study is identified as being important for providing an identification of a spectrum of strategic responses. These can vary in accordance to the extent to which agency is actively employed. The spectrum ranges from passivity through to resistance and specific responses comprise, ... 'acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation' (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:217).

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) also extol the benefits of Oliver's (1992) study of deinstitutionalisation. This provides early findings on how actors within an organization can disrupt and maintain institutions highlighting the disruption of institutions as taking place when actors proactively destroy institutions or ensure that they can no longer be used (ibid). An example of this is provided in the example of job classifications that were found to be linked to stereotyped roles based on gender and have subsequently been deinstitutionalised in most organizations (ibid). This study argues that institutions are maintained when an organization is unable to reproduce actions that are normally considered as being taken for granted (ibid). This highlights the significance of actors who strive to reproduce institutions identifying how activities of individuals should not be taken for granted emphasising

that even highly institutionalised practices still require individuals and organizations to maintain them (ibid). The potential importance of the activity of maintaining institutions has subsequently been highlighted as an important activity of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) argue that the theories presented by DiMaggio (1988) and Oliver (1991, 1992) mark a turning point in drawing attention of institutional researchers toward the importance of the activities of collective actors in organizations. These early works explore theoretically and empirically the ways in which through institutional work actors are able to create, maintain and disrupt institutions. (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

More recent studies identify a more proactive focus ‘on the ways in which actors can influence institutions (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). This has also been highlighted as being linked to an actor’s position within an organizational field and their ability to control key resources (Currie, Lockett, Finn, Martin and Waring, 2012). This study establishes that privileged actors are unlikely to come up with novel ideas or pursue change because they are deeply embedded in and advantaged by their existing institutions (ibid).

However, it is also acknowledged that research in the area of institutional work leaves still leaves many questions unanswered. This is particularly applicable to the role of individuals in institutional change (Battilana and D’Aunno (2009). This is highlighted through a call for more research into the mechanisms that enable some individuals to engage in institutional change in the face of adversity and why there is

a disparity between these actors and those who have a reluctance to engage in this process (ibid).

Lawrence and Suddaby's preliminary taxonomy (2006) uses empirical research from quality academic journals since 1990 to provide a summary of studies of institutional work that can provide the basis for further research activities. More recent developments highlight the importance of activities of individuals and networks of individuals that impact on the management of organizational change (Lawrence et al., 2009). There is also the opportunity to utilise institutional work in order to develop a holistic account of how actors deal with pressures from many different institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011). The next section considers Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) taxonomy of institutional work that they develop to apply to creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions. These provide examples of the application of purposeful activity.

Lawrence et al., (2009) suggest that while their original definition of institutional work provides a broad but useful direction for studying and theorizing organizational activity there are several issues that remain under examined and others that are under specified. It is, therefore, important when considering the concept of institutional work to ensure that this is used to clarify of meanings that set out the boundaries of operation. Within the wider environment institutional work is carried out to cater for a variety of outcomes and interests marking a clear distinction between actions associated with creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions and the accomplishments that are associated with the creation, maintenance, and disruption of institutions (ibid).

3.3.2 Link to managerial activities

Using the context of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions institutional work is distinguished by purposeful activities carried out by organizations and individuals (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). This is delineated by a framework that links previously disassociated literature on institutional work with an outline for future research into this concept (ibid). Institutional work is important because it not only has the potential for a positive impact in academia but it can also engender conversations bridging the interests of scholars and organizations together with the actors working within them' (Lawrence et al., 2009). This supports the assertion that although institutional theory has practical benefits for managers of organizations it has not yet permeated conversations of organizational managers' (ibid). Advocates of this concept also aspire to move the focus of the practical activities of actors regarding institutions to a more comprehensible understanding of the notion of institutional work taking place in business conversations outside of the academy.

Institutional work is differentiated from other aspects of institutional theory by making a careful distinction that envisions agency with the avoidance of viewing actors either as, ... "cultural dopes" trapped by institutional arrangements, or as hyper muscular institutional entrepreneurs' (Lawrence et al., 2009:1). The importance of institutional work is instead highlighted by perceiving agency within the middle of these two perspectives providing an insight into how institutions are created, maintained and changed through research providing understanding to these complex activities (ibid). This concept observes the principle that action is

simultaneously being produced, reproduced and transformed within institutional structures (Lawrence et al., 2011). Institutional work also intends to provide an understanding of the complexity of the motivations and efforts of individuals and to understand their configurations of intent as they create, maintain and change institutions (Lawrence et al., 2009). Advocates of institutional work commend this concept in addressing common issues and providing an alternative means on the way institutional theory has been progressing. In particular, it rejects the notion that it is agency is only of interest to scholars when it associated with and identifies institutional change that is associated with success (Lawrence et al., 2011).

Institutional work, therefore, highlights the importance of actors and networks of actors as they purposefully try to bring about change through creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions. Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) have highlighted the importance of using argument and persuasive language to support the justification of institutional change. Resources can also be manoeuvred by actors in preparation for defining the standards required for establishing a project utilising institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). This creates an ideal environment for actors to utilise their day to day activities of agency to engage in purposeful behaviour intended to create, maintain and disrupt institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011).

A key aspect that differentiates the concept of institutional work from other aspects of institutional theory is the emphasis on work being connected to intentionality and effort. This is in contrast to other aspects of institutional theory that explore the consequences of institutional change or stability arising out of unintended rather than

intentional activity (ibid). The notion of intentional effort is also a key concept to defining the nature of constitute institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2011, 2009).

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) argue that in order to understand the activities inherent in institutional work it is necessary to gain an awareness of the conscious skills and reflexivity exerted by individuals and collective actors. In particular, action aimed at changing institutional order within organizational fields is undertaken within a set of institutional rules. Therefore, institutional work is concerned with how actors continually engage in the routines and practices ultimately leading to dynamic activities (ibid). However, previous research applying institutional work emphasises that endeavours to maintain existing arrangements can also create the strengthening of existing institutional arrangements (Currie et al., 2012).

3.4 The Practical Application of Institutional Work

3.4.1 Actors and institutions

Placing focus on the activities of individuals allows exploration into the relationship between institutions and action. This in turn provides explanation into working environments that are typical of institutional change that are often ill defined and take time to get started (Blackler and Regan, 2006). This accords with recent research identifying institutional change and its association with organizational fields (Meyer, Gaba and Colwell, 2005). Concentrating on individual activity, in favour of

accomplishments emphasises the intentionality action in the study of institutional work and is well defined by the phrase ‘purposive action’, (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006: 216). It identifies that a great amount of intended action will have been consciously thought out and highlights the relational understanding of agency towards institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2009).

A greater understanding of intentionality allows attention to be focused on the importance of actors in institutional work providing an understanding of its boundaries in terms of aligning with traditional institutional theoretical concerns and identifying the less visible micro-processes (Lawrence et al., 2009). This also identifies intentionality as creating a more radical shift in understanding institutions and organizations by concentrating on institutional work itself as the primary focus (ibid). The relationship between institutional work and "effort" also supports and exemplifies the importance of the purposeful activities of actors (ibid). Effort therefore, provides an explanation of work from an institutional perspective although this is contingent on the focus of institutions and actions or vice versa (ibid).

Previous connections between individuals and institutions have also been given sparse attention in previous neo-institutional studies of organizations. Institutional work, therefore, provides the opportunity to study the activities of individuals as they engage in the processes of institutional creation, maintenance, disruption, and change (Lawrence et al., 2011). This represents a change of focus for institutional studies by recognising organizations that exemplify the agency of individuals’ and the importance of their purposeful contribution instead of viewing actors as mere accomplices of the activities of institutionalization and structuration (ibid).

The practical application of institutional work has also been identified as providing the opportunity to gain an understanding of the relationship between rules and discourses that represent the interaction between agency and institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011). This study identifies the extent to which the impact of actors who are embedded in an institution are enabled to identify the impact of this. In turn this enables individuals to subsequently explore how they can develop ways to operate with intent (ibid.). This also highlights how emerging institutional processes are important because they explain how and why actors work to make sense of institutions. It provides an understanding of how and why institutional work arises and its link to changes in institutions that are identified by individuals and agency in relationship to change and stability (ibid).

The application of institutional work identifies the activities of actors in exploring the environment for the emergence of different forms of institutional intentionality and the notion of effort is, therefore, critical to institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2011). It is allied to the idea of a struggle by individuals in stepping out of their established roles to adopt a reflexive stance enabling them to engage in the institutional work necessary to transform the conditions under which they live and work (Ibid). Institutional work can also address institutional and critical concerns by directly examining the efforts of actors in building alternative institutional arrangements (ibid).

3.4.2 Creating institutions

Literature on institutional change provides some useful insights into the institutional work necessary to create institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). The concept of creating institutions is also based on the efforts and skills of interested actors building on the concept of institutional entrepreneurship (Di Maggio, 1988). Creating institutions involves the establishment of rules and measures to reward compliance and ensure they are enforced. This has been further broken down into “overtly political work in which actors reconstruct rules, property rights and boundaries that define access to material resources”; “actions in which actors' belief systems are reconfigured”; and “actions designed to alter abstract categorizations in which the boundaries of meaning systems are altered” (Lawrence et al., 2009:8; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006: 221). Within these three categories nine types preliminary forms of institutional work are identified. These have been summarised in the following table:

Table 1: Creating institutions

Creating institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:221)	
Category	Form of institutional work
Overtly political work	<i>Advocacy</i> involving the mobilisation of political and regulatory support through deliberate techniques of persuasion.
	<i>Defining</i> the rule systems that confer status or identity, the boundaries or membership and the creation of status hierarchies within a field.
	<i>Vesting</i> the creation of rule structures that confer property rights.
Actors belief systems	<i>Constructing Identities</i> that define the relationship between an actor and the field in which that actor operates.
	<i>Changing normative associations</i> involving re-making the connections between sets of practices and the moral and cultural foundations for those practices.
	<i>Constructing normative networks</i> of inter-organizational connections through which practices become normatively sanctioned and which form the relevant peer group with respect to compliance, monitoring and evaluation.

Creating institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:221)	
Category	Form of institutional work
Actors alter abstract characterisation	<i>Mimicry</i> that associates new practices with existing sets of taken-for granted practices, technologies and rules in order to ease adoption
	<i>Theorising</i> the development and specification of abstract categories and the elaboration of cause and effect.
	<i>Educating</i> actors in the skills and knowledge necessary to support the new institution.

The factors leading to the successful creation of organizations also need to be considered alongside less high profile issues like understanding the actors that are most likely to engage in institutional work, the aspects supporting or hindering this activity, and the practices undertaken by actors to create institutions (Lawrence et al., 2009). Institutional work has been identified as highlighting the impact of "unintended consequences" which is important because this has been mainly neglected in research studies exploring actors' effects on institutions (Beckert, 1999; DiMaggio, 1988; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Greenwood, Suddaby and Hinings, 2002; Lawrence, 1999; Maguire et al., 2004). Gaining an understanding on the sets of practices connecting actors to institutions has been identified as yielding variably intended and unintended results (Lawrence et al., 2009). Therefore, in practical terms, institutional work involving creating institutions has possibilities of failing to achieve or creating institutions that differ from those originally conceived of (ibid).

3.4.3 Maintaining institutions

Institutional work aimed at maintaining institutions includes supporting, repairing or recreating the social mechanisms that ensure compliance (Lawrence and Suddaby,

2006). It can be divided into two categories. The first category “primarily address the maintenance of institutions through ensuring adherence to rule systems” (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:230). The second category “focuses on efforts to maintain institutions on reproducing existing norms and belief systems” (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:230). The six forms of preliminary institutional work associated with maintaining institutions have been summarised in the following table.

Table 2: Maintaining institutions

Maintaining institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:230)	
Category	Form of institutional work
Adherence to rule systems	<i>Enabling work</i> : the creation of rules that facilitate, supplement and support institutions such as the creation of authorising agents or diverting resources.
	<i>Policing</i> : ensuring compliance through enforcement, auditing and monitoring.
	<i>Deterring</i> by establishing coercive barriers to institutional change.
Reproducing existing norms and belief systems	<i>Valorising and Demonizing</i> through the provision for public consumption of positive and negative examples that illustrate the normative foundations of an institution.
	<i>Mythologizing</i> by preserving the normative underpinnings of an institution by creating and sustaining myths regarding its history.
	<i>Embedding and routinising</i> by actively infusing the normative foundations of an institution into the participants’ day-to-day routines and organizational practices.

Research focussed on studies associated with institutional work carried out to maintain institutions is limited creating the challenge of defining how this can be reproduced as a longer term viable activity (Lawrence et al; 2009). In particular work maintaining rule systems (enabling, policing and deterring) (ibid) is characterised by an awareness of the need to provide evidence on how this can be used and the impact it will have. In turn maintaining institutions by reproducing norms and belief systems (valorising/ demonising, mythologizing and embedding/

routinising)' (ibid) is harder to understand because actors are either not familiar with what was originally intended or the impact that these activities would have (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). Institutional maintenance also concerns changes to organizations through institutional work requiring considerable effort that is linking to organizational or environmental change (ibid). Factors impacting on this include new people joining, work areas entering into unanticipated directions and unknown factors from the external environment. Institutions also sustain maintenance by relying on actors to sustain a stable environment despite unexpected changes creating a significant impact (ibid). Institutional maintenance has also been identified through the connection between an institutional actor's position within an organizational field and their control of key resources (Currie et al., 2012). This study highlights the importance of privileged actors who are unlikely to come up with novel ideas or pursue change because they are deeply embedded in and advantaged by their existing institutions (ibid).

3.4.4 Disrupting institutions

There is an extremely limited amount of research on actors who have deliberately decided to disrupt institutions. It is commonly linked to work on creating institutions where there is a 'relationship between an institution and the controls that perpetuate it: disconnecting rewards and sanctions, dissociating moral foundations and undermining assumptions and beliefs all disrupt institutions by lowering in some way the impact of those social controls on non-compliance' (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006:238).

Table 3: Disrupting institutions

Disrupting institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:235)
<i>Disconnecting sanctions</i> by working through the state apparatus to disconnect rewards and sanctions from some set of practices technologies or rules.
<i>Disassociating moral foundations</i> by disassociating the practice, rule or technology from its moral foundation within a specific cultural context.
<i>Undermining assumptions and beliefs</i> by decreasing the perceived risks of innovation and differentiation by undermining core assumptions and beliefs.

3.4.5 Applying institutional work to the study of organizations

Zietsma and Lawrence's (2010) exploration into institutional work within the context of boundary and practice work focuses on the harvesting practices and decision authority in the British Columbian coastal forest industry. This study conceives the role of institutional work as transforming organizational fields through an exploration into the actors who create, maintain and disrupt practices that are considered to be legitimate in the boundaries and fields of different groups (ibid). It also explores the boundary and practice work of actors that underpin cycles of institutional innovation, conflict, stability and re-stabilisation and how these are influenced by the practices of undertaking the boundary and practice work of a different institutional process (Ibid). Lawrence, Leca and Zilber (2013) highlight the importance of this work in producing an integrated model that provides the opportunity to gain an appreciation of how institutions are created maintained and disrupted.

The introduction of change into an environment operating established ways of working is considered by Reay, et al., (2006) in their study involving the legitimization of a new nursing practitioner role. This study considers how the

efforts of actors can achieve this through a series of small gains to achieve success. It also identifies the role that middle managers can able to play in achieving change. The observation that middle managers facilitate change at upper organizational levels recognises their involvement in change initiatives (Ibid). More importantly the study highlights how middle managers manipulate their embeddedness to engender or dissuade change initiative and how this recognition might be useful for other studies (Ibid).

Suddaby and Viale's (2011) study of professional projects provides an example of institutional work associated with creating an institution. This research reveals the crucial yet very concealed role undertaken by professional workers in this area of activity. Conceiving projects as vehicles that engender institutional change it explores the efforts of professional actors as they purposefully utilize their skills and authority to create a new activity including introducing new individuals, procedures and social activities (Ibid). This is achieved by professionals utilising their skilfulness to both challenge and provide definitions for a new area of activity including mobilising actors and resources to occupy this. This also enables them to establish boundaries and define rules and measures (Ibid). This study also highlights the requirement for more research into the way professionals use communication skills to mobilise resources to effect change initiatives (Ibid).

Another study involving the creation of institutions has been undertaken by Van Dijk, Berends, Jelinek, Romme and Weggeman (2011) who explore the legitimization of radical innovations. This study provides an insightful definition into how actors deploy a number of activities to

achieve this objective. Actors who are embedded within the structure of the organization are identified as nonetheless being able to mobilise their efforts to radically innovate and effect change (ibid).

Institutional maintenance is defined as a ritualistic process and this is exemplified in the activity of formal dining at Cambridge University. The association of these rituals are also linked to the preservation of the British class system (Dacin, Munir and Tracey, 2010). This study highlights the importance of enacting rituals to maintain institutions and it also draws attention to the fact that these processes have a strong effect on the individuals beyond the performing or enacting of rituals (ibid). Lok and De Rond (2013) conduct another study into institutional maintenance through an exploration of the rituals of the Oxford and Cambridge university boat race. This identifies micro activities that maintain institutionalised practice and how maintaining institutions immunises an organization against their breakdown raising the question as to whether or not the same activities to maintain institutions exists in more ordinary institutions (ibid).

Currie, et al., (2012) explore how the institutional maintenance exerted by medical professionals enables them to sustain their dominance in a situation where the introduction of new nursing or medical roles threatened the power and status of specialised doctors. This study is also important in extending Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) preliminary taxonomy of institutional through its application within the arena of professional work. In particular, a number of types of institutional work are observed as interacting identified different types of categories cross categories associated with creating or maintaining institutions (ibid). Different

types of institutional work are found to cross categories of creating and maintaining to preserve existing institutions. These practices ensure that the delivery of genetics services is delegated rather than substituted. This study reveals how ‘theorising’, ‘defining, educating,’ and ‘constructing normative networks’, originally linked to institutional creation are types of institutional work enacted for institutional maintenance (ibid).

Micelotta and Washington (2013) highlight the application of repair work in maintaining institutions that in turn enables powerful actors to reverse change and re-establish the status quo. Lawrence et al., (2013) commend this study for defining institutions for their resilience and highlighting the importance of the process of maintenance as repair work.

Paroutis and Heracleous (2013) study explores interviews conducted with directors responsible for strategy to explore what the concept of strategy meant for strategists. The focus concentrates on the role of top tier executives who are responsible for devising corporate strategy applying the concept of institutional work through the use of a discourse focused approach in order to link both institutional theory and practice theory (ibid). The study importantly identifies how this provides an opportunity to build upon a very limited amount of research specifically applying discourse to the concept of institutional work (ibid). A key finding is that adoption of strategy is contingent on the way actors are able to utilise discourse through their accomplishment of institutional work (ibid). This calls for the more research to examine the application of discourse to processes that require the application of institutional work to other organizational contexts (ibid).

3.4.6 Future directions

The future directions for exploring institutional work have been given special consideration by Lawrence, et al., (2013) in their introduction to the special issue of *Organization Studies* in 2013. This publication reviewed the development of institutional work as an academic concept and also discussed future directions together with issues that had received less focus but deserved more attention. Firstly, emphasis is placed on the importance of joining work and institutions. In particular the authors define actors engaged in the activity of institutional work as being oriented towards goals, reflecting on their activities and capable of enacting their actions (ibid). Institutional dynamics are identified as endeavours to capture the interrelationship between structure and agency (Battilana, Leca and Boxenbaum, 2009).

A second consideration concerns who participates in institutional work and what provides the motivation and inspiration for individuals to participate in this activity (Dorado, 2013, Lawrence et al. 2013). Institutional work areas that are currently under explored are considered within the context of the purposive actions of individuals that affect institutions and the question as to whether these efforts are successful in shaping institutions (Lawrence et al., 2013; Lawrence et al., 2009). However, other studies have tended to highlight intended results in favour of focusing on individuals' experiences when they enact or experience institutional work yet the effort demanded by institutional work are also highlighted as needing greater exploration (Lawrence et al., 2013). This includes emotional efforts that

actors need to exercise in order to gain an awareness that is reflexive when engaging in work to maintain and disrupt institutions (ibid).

3.5 Conclusion

The contribution of the concept of institutional work to this thesis facilitates a deeper understanding of how middle managers are purposeful in their response to selling issues to corporate, political and external executives. Institutional work can be applied as an effective theoretical tool for exploring the efforts involved in upwards-internal engagement and outwards activities with external public-sector health agencies including the NHS.

The theoretical concepts of institutional work that are applicable to the research in this thesis utilise Scott's institutional pillars to demonstrate how some strategic activities involved with selling issues are relatively straightforward while some are very difficult or almost impossible. Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) taxonomy for studying forms of institutional work that have been catalogued under the headings of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions are applied to the purposeful activities of middle managers within this context. At the same time these activities also respond to the call for institutional work as area of research that responds to agency in its broader context with respect to institutions (Lawrence et al., 2009).

Chapter 4 – Context

4.1 Introduction

The empirical setting for this study was a county within a rural area of the UK operating a two-tier system of service-delivery throughout its jurisdiction. It comprised five district councils and a county council. This provided an appropriate environment to explore the types of institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2011, 2009, Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006,) middle managers engaged in when putting strategy into practice.

Research activities were specifically directed towards the attempts of middle managers to define and deliver an integrated service-delivery model and then exert strategic influence upwardly to top tier managers and outwardly to potential external clients. They were set within the context of how middle managers responsible for an integrated Home Improvement Agency (HIA) promoted the achievements of organizational change in the provision of home adaptations across the county. The organizational change examined within this research activity has involved the attempts of middle managers to deliver an integrated HIA project across a rural county.

4.2 Background

This PhD thesis explores the activities of middle managers engaged in the provision of home adaptations to older and disabled people to enable them to maintain independence by living in their own homes. This activity has been greatly assisted by disability facilities grants (DFG) that were introduced by means testing. This provides a mandatory right for an eligible older adult or disabled person to a grant support to alter their dwelling to facilitate access and use of all normal facilities of the home. The DFG has a current value of up to £30,000 and the central UK government currently administers and supports any further increases.

Since 2005 heads of service responsible for housing within five district councils and a head of service within adult social care within a county council have been working collectively to explore the way housing adaptations are delivered in the county. This has been in direct response to an increasingly aging population and comprehensive spending reviews of local authorities and their effect on service delivery. This work identified differences in delivery across the county highlighting a need to change and improve the delivery and outcome for customers. Subsequent reports were commissioned and by 2009 it was agreed that improvement would be yielded by organizational changes involving a closer integration of local authorities providing this service. A further exercise confirmed that further improvement could be achieved through the utilisation of locally devised and agreed methods following broad principles of lean thinking.

In 2010 a multi agency project was established with the intention of exploring the current provision of home adaptations and related home improvement services. This involved gathering evidence to establish how the delivery of home adaptations could be established into a more effective and efficient pathway across the county. This culminated in the establishment of a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Project Board comprising a partnership of the middle managers in the county with the responsibility for delivering home adaptations. Key activities have addressed duplication in services, long waiting times and inconsistent working practices.

A service review was completed in 2011 arising from the decision to identify waste and duplication. A service redesign resulted in a new approach that was trialed in one region of the county comprising the county council and two district councils. This experiment revealed identifiable improvements to service delivery through an integrated approach. The key reasons for delivering services through an integrated model were that it increased effectiveness through working in a collaborative way, it provided the potential for public and private sectors to collaborate and improve effectiveness and it built new and innovative ways of working. During 2012 another local authority decided to join this regional consortia of integrated home improvement agencies. This partnership is currently moving forward to become a formal partnership protected and guided by appropriate binding agreements.

The remaining two local authorities falling outside the consortia started a pilot involving integrated service delivery in late 2013 with the intention of a formal

evaluation to enable a decision to be made on the future service model. It is further proposed that the formal partnership agreement is structured with the potential for all local authorities to deliver home improvements on an integrated basis across the county.

The data analysis for this PhD project covers the period August 2012 to June 2015. This comprises semi-structure interviews with middle managers, corporate and external executives, a documentary analysis and meetings observations.

4.3 Home Improvement Agencies (HIA's)

This activity firstly drew upon the wider objectives for HIA's. These have been widely defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) function of the UK government and 'Foundations', the national body that had been appointed to oversee the national work being carried out by HIA's across the country. The Foundations website confirmed that there over 85% of the population had access to one of the 200 HIA's in operation across the country. HIA's could comprise a directly provided local authority service, a service provided by an independent charity or through a 'managing agent' constituting a registered social landlord, housing association or care provider. HIA's often worked in partnership with other local agencies and providers that could include health and social care partners, and deliver initiatives to address specific health objectives. This often resulted in HIA's and Occupational Therapists developing a close working partnership to deliver significant improvements in response time from initial referral

and reduction of waiting time for major and minor adaptations when working together (www-foundations.uk.com).

Each year HIA's dealt with around 200,000 enquiries enabling older vulnerable adults to maintain independence and live comfortably and safely in their own homes. This was achieved through the provision of housing advice; a handyperson service that included small home repairs, home safety and security adaptations; hospital discharge services and interventions that prevented falls. Coordinated adaptations and home repairs enable independent living, including the provision of grab rails, stair-lifts and major work such as ground-floor extensions. HIA's also undertake work associated with around half of all of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funded adaptations totalling around £60 million. These enable disabled people and older vulnerable adults to make changes to their homes such as:

- Widening doors and installing ramps
- Improving access to rooms and facilities – e.g. stair lifts or a downstairs bathroom
- Providing a heating system suitable for their needs
- Adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier for use.

(H.M Government, 2011).

4.4 The Integration of HIA Services Across a Rural County

This thesis explores the organizational changes associated with decisions by a group of middle managers with responsibility for providing housing services and occupational therapy support to vulnerable adults. The middle managers in the consortium of local authorities involved in this project explored the feasibility of delivering an integrated approach to HIA services. Middle managers within the HIA project team represented heads of housing services operating at second and third tier levels of responsibility within five district councils and a head of service within a directorate responsible for delivering health and social care functions for adults in a county council. The district councils typically comprised between 300 and 500 employees whereas the county council consisted of approximately 20,000 employees. Members of the HIA project team represented the type of middle manager defined as a departmental head with the autonomy to develop new initiatives (Kanter, 1982) often reporting to a deputy or chief executive (Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990).

The group of middle managers had previously worked collectively since 2005 to investigate how housing adaptations could be improved across the county. This responded positively to the challenges of an aging population and a requirement to operate within reduced public-sector spending. During this period the group of middle managers highlighted differences in delivery and service systems. This directly led to the unilateral decision to change the whole approach towards service-delivery in order to improve outcomes for customers.

In 2009 this group of middle managers commissioned a consulting firm to carry out a desktop review of how home improvement services were being delivered across the county. A business case, commissioned by the HIA project team for confidential internal use only, focused on how people could be helped to live independently and how the quality of home improvement agency services could be improved.

Following a decision to implement the recommendations from this document an initial project was delivered in the following stages:

Stage one:

A desktop review of the way HIA services were currently being delivered across the county.

Stage two

An engagement exercise took place with service users and key agencies to identify a shared vision and opportunities for joint working.

Stage three

Soft market testing was undertaken to explore the possibilities of alternative models for service provision.

Stage four

An option generation and appraisal exercise took place to develop a model for service-delivery across the county.

In order to implement the model for service-delivery suggested in stage four it was decided to establish a HIA project team of middle managers comprising heads of housing, a senior representative from the county council together with two local authority project managers. A key decision taken by this project team at this stage was to adopt a methodology that followed lean-systems thinking. This decision was based on the assumption the application of a systems approach would facilitate a detailed picture of what was happening across the county. The systems approach could then be utilised to decide on and implement fundamental decisions on the changes that needed to be made to transform the existing provision of services.

4.4.1 The application of a process model

Stage four was guided by the middle managers in the HIA project team's application of a lean thinking methodology to the project. It was anticipated that this would provide a deeper understanding of what the HIA service currently provided and what the HIA project team wanted it to do. The specific lean systems methodology that was adopted followed that of the consultancy firm 'Vanguard' (www.systemsthinking.co.uk).

Closer investigation into the principles of the 'Vanguard' model revealed that this had also been used by a number of district council housing directorates within England. Further specific information on these principles of lean systems thinking

were obtained from the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) report: 'A Systematic Approach to Service-improvement: Evaluating Systems Thinking in Housing' (ODPM: 2005).

This document indicated that the 'Vanguard' lean systems methodology was based on an assumption that organizations had historically concentrated on improving its individual parts but did not link these improvements to each other. Lean-systems-thinking challenged this approach by encouraging managers to concentrate on how various parts of the system related to each other to ensure that its parts were not isolated and that all of the parts were accounted for. The emphasis shifted concentration to the importance of the relationship between the parts instead of the parts themselves. This followed the assumption that even if all of the individual parts were improved individually this would not solve the problem. Therefore, solutions would only be achieved if attention was paid to the relationships of the parts and how these collectively impacted on the system (ODPM, 2005).

It also transpired from an analysis of this documentation that the 'Vanguard' lean-systems methodology was an adaptation of the service sector model that originated from the Toyota Production System. This originated from a study of the American Ford plant that identified certain anomalies in its system. Within the Ford model manufacturing commenced with the car, which was subsequently sold to the customer. The Toyota system commenced with the customer's order that pulled the process through the operations. This activity was identified as the 'demand pull' and created savings in inventory by avoiding the stockpiling of finished cars awaiting an

order. This process also recognised that the appropriate people to design and deliver improvements to the flow were the people undertaking the work. This led to the decision to encourage those doing the work to question the way this was done and encourage them to identify a better way and refuse to accept that something could not be done. The role of the manager in this system was to allow people the freedom to decide how best to do their job and to support them by allowing them opportunities to implement change (ODPM, 2005).

‘Vanguard’ subsequently transferred the Toyota ‘lean systems’ approach to service organizations wanting to use systems thinking to improve performance. This systems approach was then adopted by a number of local authority controlled housing organizations who initiated a series of pilots to assess its impact on services, customers, employees and the organization. In the housing pilots each demand was unique because the customer set the requirements and the system needed to accommodate a wide variety of demand to meet each customer’s need. The customer also actively participated in the process instead of passively receiving a product (ODPM, 2005).

The middle managers within this research study decided to apply the ‘Vanguard’ lean systems approach to the concept of delivering integrated HIA services across the county. This highlighted the requirement for the middle managers in the HIA project team to change their approach in the way they delivered HIA services. This

created the challenge of establishing a delivery model that met customer demand and reflected delivery from the customer's perspective. The HIA project team also needed to assess service demands and ensure that these were understood from the perspective of what the customer wanted from the system. It was also necessary for the HIA project team to gain a complete understanding of the work from start to finish in order that economies were derived through understanding the flow of work instead of the scale of production.

By applying the 'Vanguard' approach to lean systems meant that when work was undertaken it was measured purely against demand. This meant that activities were only undertaken when they were required. This approach ensured that the right resources could be pulled in at the right time. This new approach to service-delivery responded to the 'Vanguard' principles of ensuring responsibility were delegated to those with the ability to do what was needed (ODPM, 2005).

4.4.2 The integrated HIA project team

During stage four the middle managers in the HIA project team progressively applied the Vanguard Consulting lean systems methodology to the HIA project. This eventually led to an agreement in principle for a whole systems approach to improve services in favour of making modifications to existing practices. A multi-agency HIA project team established in September 2010 explored the possibility of providing integrated adaptations and related HIA services with the potential to deliver efficient and effective home adaptations to customers across the county.

The HIA project team established early on that the current delivery model that was in operation was extremely deficient in delivering effective outputs to the customer. Firstly there were delays of up to 496 days in the delivery and installation of home adaptations. Secondly the organizational barriers in the delivery model had caused a 35% customer dropout rate. In an attempt to address these areas of deficiency the HIA project team worked to the objective of establishing an integrated HIA delivery model that brought together different professions working for the district councils and the county council. This included the creation of a new hybrid role of housing assessment officer combining the skills of occupational therapy assistant with those of a technical housing assistant. Existing services were linked together within a delivery framework that involved working together to deliver an integrated approach to housing assessment and its subsequent solutions.

During 2012 middle managers in the HIA project team conducted an options appraisal for service-delivery in order to decide on the appropriate delivery mechanism. This led to the decision to adopt the following staged approach for rolling out an integrated HIA service across the county:

First stage

A full experimental service comprising collaboration with two district councils and a county council commenced in December 2012. The managers within this part of the HIA project team were tasked with bringing together Occupational Therapy (previously provided by the county council) and technical HIA caseworkers, grant officers and technical services officers (previously provided by the district councils)

into a multi-agency line managed team. As a direct consequence the roles of HIA caseworkers, grant officers and occupational therapy assistants were merged into the role of housing assessment officer; occupational therapy assistants widened their role to include housing issues and external contractors were entrusted and empowered to work with the new team to deliver solutions in a customer-focused fashion.

Second stage

In April 2013 another district council was rolled into the Stage 1 experimental service.

Third stage

A similar service was established in the remaining part of the county in September 2013. This incorporated the remaining two district councils and the county council and followed the same processes as those outlined in the first stage.

Fourth stage (aspirational)

It was eventually decided that a fully integrated HIA service that incorporated the activities of all five-district councils and the county council would only be considered when stages 1, 2 and 3 of the service had been fully established. The rationale behind this decision was based on the HIA project team reaching agreement that a staged approach across a large number of organizations needed to be managed and stabilized before progression to the final stage could be contemplated. It was also decided that when the service was fully established across both areas it would be possible to provide evidence and best practice to the idea of delivering a single service across the whole county.

4.5 Conclusion

This study explores middle managers in their endeavours to deliver an integrated home improvement agency (HIA) project across a rural county in the United Kingdom. HIA's have been nationally established to enable vulnerable adults to maintain their independence through the provision of housing advice and a handyperson service to deliver home repairs and safety and security adaptations. A key achievement of the HIA in this empirical area of research has been the hybridisation of the roles of occupational therapy assistants (provided by the county council) and technical caseworkers, grant officers and technical service officers (provided by the district councils) into the role of housing assessment officer. This has also led to the formation of a multi-agency line-managed team. Applying a methodology following the principles of lean systems to the HIA project has created a whole systems approach to improve services. As at June 2015 (the final date for collecting the empirical data for this thesis) the HIA service is being delivered on an integrated basis within two regions of the county. The general consensus is to work towards the broad objective of a wholly integrated service across the whole county. This would operate the HIA as a shared service that is hosted by one of the local authorities. The involvement of political executives and corporate executives will be promoted as part of the governance provisions. The governance arrangements would be agreed through the appropriate procedures in each participating local authority. This would include ensuring that each local authority shared the financial risk and benefits to an agreed formula.

Chapter 5 - Research Design

5.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the concept of issue selling (Dutton and Ashford, 1993) undertaken by middle managers as they established and delivered an integrated approach to delivering home adaptations. This explored how they contributed to internal strategic decision-making upwards and outwards. This explored the following research question that was developed in the previous chapters through a systematic literature review of theorizing middle managers, strategic practices and middle managers and strategy as institutional work:

How do middle managers use strategic practices to accomplish institutional work upwards and outwards?

To test this further sub research questions were derived from the associated literature:

- How do middle managers use types of institutional work to sell issues upwards?
- How do middle managers use types of institutional work to sell issues outwards?
- Are there any contingency factors that impact on these activities?

The concept of institutional work was chosen as a lens for examining the behaviours used to create, maintain and disrupt institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011, 2009; Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). This research study explored how the behaviours of middle managers were adapted to respond to a change in work organization. This marked a movement away from delivering professionally specialized, differentiated and hierarchically ordered services within their respective organizations to an integrated and systems based approach to service-delivery.

The eventual research design adopted needed to satisfy the expectations of making academic and theoretical contributions to the strategic activity of middle managers aligned with their activities as they influenced and implemented strategy upwards and outwards.

5.2 Methodology

This section considers the ontological and epistemological assumptions that were applied to this PhD research study. The research study explored how middle managers used types of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006) to establish and deliver an integrated approach to delivering a service and influence strategic decisions upwardly to top tier managers and outwardly to external service providers. It utilized qualitative research methods to explore how different types of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) were utilized when undertaking these activities

Suddaby, Seidl and Le's (2013) recent paper outlines where strategy as practice meets neo institutional theory. This was used as a starting point for defining an

appropriate way of framing the central phenomena of interest here. Suddaby et al., (2013) argue that strategy as practice and neo-institutional theory have similarities because they both emerged to challenge prevalent economic perspectives that governed research into organizational strategy. However, the key difference between these perspectives is that neo-institutionalism broadly challenges macroeconomic issues whereas strategy as practice has its concerns with micro-economic activities (Suddaby et al., 2013). Both perspectives also direct attention towards behavioural processes concerned with individual ‘cognitions and emotions’ rather than social structural outcomes. They also have similarities in highlighting the significance of language in ‘creating organizational reality and creating the symbolic conditions under which practices, both institutional and organizational, can exist’ (Suddaby et al., 2013:332).

Suddaby et al.’s., (2013) paper reinforces the assumption that institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2011, 2009; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) entails the adoption of a return to a phenomenological perspective, as outlined by Berger and Luckmann (1967). This allows attention to be shifted away from the neo-institutional preoccupation with social structures as outcomes of institutional processes, and to refocus on the construction of the processes themselves (Suddaby et al., 2013). Phenomenology, broadly speaking, prioritises close attention to the particular and hence is a useful foundation for studying phenomena in close detail. This makes it consistent with strategy as practice and also with the literature review, which shows middle managers occupying complex roles that are neither wholly autonomous nor subject to structural constraints:

All typifications of common sense thinking are themselves integral elements of the concrete historical socio cultural. *Lebenswelt* within which they prevail as taken for granted and socially approved. Their structure determines amongst other things the social distribution of knowledge and its relativity and relevance to the concrete social environment of a concrete group in a concrete historical situation (Schutz, 1962:149).

Phenomenology has been criticized as not being able to verify meaning (Abel, 1948), and consequently, lacking in validity or the possibility of replication. However, it affords rich insight into social phenomena – particularly once it is acknowledged that involvement and implication in the context do not simply compromise validity – they can generate new theoretical understanding. Subjectivity is not simply a limitation to be eradicated; it reflects a certain view and insight.

The approach taken, therefore, recognized the important value of the behaviours of ‘what actors actually do, their shared cognitions, and the role of language in creating shared meanings’ (Suddaby et al., 2013). This reflects Lawrence et al’s., (2011) argument that early theorization of institutional creation emerged from a closer connection of individuals and institutions such as ‘arising directly from reciprocal typifications that occur in the habitual interaction of individuals’ (Lawrence et al., 2011: 54).

Another key argument from social construction directly related to this research was the identification of repeated activities that were linked to the formation of habits through a process of ‘habitualisation (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 70). This design framed institutionalization as occurring, ... ‘through a process of representative inter-exchanges justifying the repetition of actions and becoming habit forming by its actors’ (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 72). Practices that were repeated stopped being considered as “there we go again” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 77) to eventually become the accepted way to behave “this is how things are done” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 77).

However, I was cautious not to adopt total reliance on social-construction. In its weaker forms social-constructionism only emphasizes the socially constructed nature of knowledge and institutions, which was the focus here. The difficulties associated with accepting social construction in its strong form are that it identifies phenomena like these as nothing more than social constructions. In contrast my stance was that socially-produced or constructed phenomena such as institutions still have a substantial independence from the interpretations or descriptions, which external observers (such as social scientists) had of them (Sayer, 2000). This departs from strong social-constructionism, e.g.:

‘strong’ social constructionism is founded on an epistemic fallacy in confusing its social constructs or interpretations with their material products or referents, and in confusing researchers’ constructions with those of the people they study’ (Sayer 2000: 102).

This stance remains consistent with Suddaby et al's., (2013) reaffirmation of the socially-constructed nature of the core objects of inquiry and the consequence traditional assumptions about the depersonalized features of organizations and institutions should be loosened (Suddaby et al., 2013). This approach, therefore, accepted the epistemological assumptions that support a movement away from the neo institutionalist perceptions of organizations and institutions as fixed structures disconnected from the actors who created them. Instead the epistemological assumptions supported 'contingent outcomes of ongoing interactions and inter-subjective interpretations of the individuals and social groups through which they are constituted' (Suddaby et al., 2013:338).

5.3 Case Study

This research employed a single case study as an inductive qualitative approach in order to answer:

‘the “how” questions rather the “how many”, and to provide an understanding of the world from the perspective of those studied (i.e. the informants); and for examining and articulating processes’ (Pratt, 2009:856).

This also followed the principles of an interpretive case study in attempting to, ...

‘understand the phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. Unlike positivist case studies which define quality in terms of validity and reliability interpretist case studies define quality in terms of the plausibility of the story and the overall argument’ (Myers, 2009:77-78).

A single case study was chosen to answer “how” and “why” questions when tracing operational links over time (Yin, 2009). This also guided the conducting of research on the basis that meaningful characteristics of real life events were considered through an examination of a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations. Data had also been gathered through a variety of sources illuminating the case through the convergence of these different approaches (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

The empirical focal point was the institutional work of middle managers as they sold issues to corporate, political and external executives. Research activities were specifically directed towards identifying the purposeful attempts of middle managers as they sold issues relating to strategic decisions upwards and outwards. The case study was used to identify and highlight the types of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) being undertaken by the middle managers in this study as they sold issues to corporate and political executives internally and to external executives. This approach endorsed the ability is consistent with the use of comprehensive case studies to provide tangible examples of institutional work to explain the practices of individuals and organizations (Lawrence et al., 2009).

The case study design allowed the micro processes that focused on undertaking strategy at individual and group level (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009) issue-selling activities that took place between middle managers and top managers (Dutton and Ashford, 1993, Dutton et al., 1997) and their ability to promote sell issues externally.

Following preliminary interviews with the heads of housing in each of the five district councils, the selection of a case study approach was chosen. This was based upon the basis of its ability to provide a new perspective (Myers, 2009). The interest internally was to explore how middle managers used types of institutional work to sell issues to corporate and political executives. The interest externally was to explore how middle managers used types of institutional work to attempt to sell issues to external executives.

Planning was of utmost importance because of the danger that the case study could lack rigour if it did not follow systematic procedures (Yin 2009). Special attention was paid to ensure that the evidence gleaned from the case was equivocal evidence and that biased views did not influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. This activity ensured that the case study provided a rich source of data to substantiate its context (Myers, 2009).

The case study, therefore, followed an empirical inquiry approach that investigated in-depth contemporary phenomena within their real life context

relying on multiple sources of evidence and data. Benefits were also derived from the prior development of theoretical propositions that guided the collection of data and analysis.

5.4 Reflexivity

This PhD study paid particular attention to reflexivity where the researcher ensured an enhanced recognition of their own position in terms of creating a theoretical and practical understanding of the subject through an acute awareness of their own self-construction of data influenced data collection and analysis (Grbich, 2007). In particular, researchers have been observed as approaching interviews with an awareness of the subjectivity of their situation as this relates to the interviewees (Roulston, 2010). This was extended to consideration of the position of the researcher towards their field of study (Pratt, 2009). For clarification although in the case of myself I was a previous middle manager in human resources within local government I did not know any of the participants before the research took place and I was never an employee of any of the six local authorities that I was exploring (ibid). This is important because previous research has identified the importance of defining the any instances of empathy that might exist between interviewers and interviewees (Mann, 2011).

However, there are dangers in following an assumption that a researcher is at all times able to be able to objectively be reflective on their position of engagement at all times (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Therefore, the reflexivity undertaken within this study sought to pursue a more critically theoretical perspective that

acknowledged the values of the key stakeholders (ibid). This supports the assertion that the building of theory is not limited by preconceptions and instead the constant comparison between the researcher and the findings from the data has the potential to produce less biased theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). This process was supported by reflective remarks that provided a key resource of commentary and issues emerging during the taking of field notes at meetings observations (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Maintaining an independent stance from the data is a particular item of concern for qualitative researchers because of the reliance on themselves as the major data collectors and analysts (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1997). In response to this the writing up of the data in the analysis has followed the principle of indent and single space to help readers establish what the respondents said in contrast to the author's interpretation (ibid). This approach has observed the complexities of the choices being made by the observations and writing of the researcher (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

5.5 Ethical Considerations

Careful consideration was paid to procedural ethics in terms of agreeing a checklist of the ethical requirements of the case study research (Chenhall, Senior, and Belton 2011). This was achieved by completion and approval of a research governance form and in compliance with the University of Warwick's policy on publication and authorship, insurance and indemnity research data management and the research code of practice. It also included provision of written

confirmation of subjects assured confidentiality and anonymity prior to interview. A copy of the interview transcript was made available to respondents upon their request. A second dimension to ethics in qualitative research was ‘ethics in practice’ which related to the everyday ethical issues that arose in conducting research (Guillemin and Gillam 2004).

5.6 Data Collection

The research study sought to collect archival documents, field notes from observations at project board meetings and semi-structured interviews between August 2012 and June 2015.

5.6.1 Documentary analysis (August 2012 to June 2015)

A storyboard produced by the HIA project team in 2012 provided an introduction to the progress and background to the project. This was supplemented by an action plan and a project management tool that provided details of how the new system would work and how perceived problems would be gradually resolved. The HIA business case provided a rich source of information on the current and future intentions of the project. Various scoping documents outlined how the project team were developing the initial part of the project in the one region of the county and rolling out a new project for integrated HIA service-delivery for the rest of the county. A number of documents that had been produced to monitor the

ongoing progress and performance of the HIA project team were regularly analysed. These comprised a measures and performance report that was produced on a quarterly basis (example detailed for information in Appendix A); a regular risk register; an annual report; a progress report measuring the milestones of the project; a report relating to programme management information and agendas and minutes of HIA project board meetings which were held on a monthly basis. This information provided a documented summary of the day-to-day activities undertaken by the middle managers within the study.

This study also benefited from a number of financial documents that were produced to monitor income and expenditure. These included budget sheets; reports on funding requirements and interim finance reports. These provided an insight into the emphasis that middle managers within the HIA project team placed on ensuring that the project operated within budget and was financially viable. Various documents that related to pressing HR issues provided a source of information that highlighted the complexities of managing changes to people's terms and conditions of employment and working practices. These included HR briefing notes, a structure chart on roles and responsibilities, and various draft documents proposing changes to HR policy to ensure equity of practice across the integrated local authorities. This activity supported the benefits of building up a significant amount of archives (Gephart, 1993) and to gain a deeper understanding of the research area (Bryman and Bell 2003). This information was also useful for highlighting new interview questions that could be covered in subsequent interviews (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006).

5.6.2 Observations (September 2012 to June 2015)

Over 50 hours of field observation were undertaken by attending meetings of the HIA project board to observe how middle managers discussed strategy as practice issues related to integrating home improvement services. A total of 20 project board meetings were attended and these were of an average of two hours duration. During these observations detailed notes were taken and then written up as a record of the event (please see Appendix B for an example). Reflective comments related to institutional theory were also placed alongside the narrative. These observations provided a richer picture and contributed to questions for inclusion in the interview schedule and in adding to the final analysis. It is important to emphasise that the observations took place on the basis that I did not participate in events instead I was, ...'essentially a spectator' (Myers, 2009:139) with very limited action between myself and the managers I was observing. This activity also involved a period of, ...'enculturation, a time where you learn to become a member of another culture or sub culture (Myers, 2009:139).

5.6.3 Semi-structured interviews (September 2012 to July 2014)

Semi-structured interviews were chosen on the basis that the research investigation had a fairly clear focus allowing for more specific issues to be addressed. A series of questions formed a topic guide eliciting in-depth data on the attitudes. This followed

the principle where fairly specific topics were covered questions were more general in their frame of reference than of a structured interview. Latitude was also afforded to ask further questions in order to pick up on significant replies. The interview topic guide allowed for a certain amount of areas to be created so that questions flowed reasonably well; interview questions were formulated to assist in the answering of theoretical research questions, using language that was comprehensible and relevant for the people being interviewed (Bryman 2008). The interviews with this thesis were predominantly acknowledged as ‘narratives’ as interviewees told stories that related to their individual perception of the situation (Riessman, 1993).

A total of 39 interviews were undertaken between August 2012 and July 2014. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed and comprised 785 pages of transcript. Data was gathered in three phases.

Phase 1: preliminary interviews August 2012 to February 2013.

During this period 16 interviews took place with middle managers comprising 5 interviews with heads of housing; 1 interview with a head of service in the county council’s social care and health directorate; 2 interviews with the joint project managers and 2 interviews with other members of the home improvement agency board. These were supplemented with 6 progress interviews. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for about an hours' duration and were conducted at the interviewee’s workplace. A range of issues were explored relating to the

strategic activities of middle managers in integrating service-delivery and their involvement in gaining the support of top executives and in influencing the decisions of key managers of potential client organizations. Questions within the topic guide (please see Appendix C for example) focused on their activities within the HIA project team in terms of what had been achieved and the project's key objectives. Specific questions addressed how effectively the partnership had been in delivering integrated services and the role middle managers could play in delivering integrated services and what needed to take place to deliver a singular approach to change. Additional questions covered how effective they had been in influencing strategic decisions undertaken by top managers and external organizations. The intention of these interviews was to scope out the middle managers' approach to transform the system, determine their perception of the partnership and assess how each stakeholder wanted to take the project forward. This included making an initial assessment on how they were interacting to change the ways of thinking and to identify if there were any cultural assumptions at work.

Phase 2: interviews May 2013 to April 2014.

This first phase of interviews informed a second phase of 12 interviews that took place with internal corporate executives and external executives in public-sector health agencies between May 2013 and April 2014. 6 interviews took place with local authority corporate executives and 6 interviews took place with external executives from public health, the National Health Service and strategic

commissioning. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted for about an hours' duration and were conducted at the interviewee's workplace. They comprised a range of semi-structured questions that had been formulated on responses provided by the responses from the first phase of interviews. The intention was to relate the strategic activities of middle managers with the perceptions of the executives. This was necessary to ascertain the effectiveness of the endeavours of middle managers in gaining the support of top executives and in impacting on the decisions of external executives in potential client organizations. Questions within the topic guide (please see Appendix D for example) focused on how the middle managers contributed to the corporate agenda. This included whether there was anything they could do to be more effective, what helped in their relationships and whether there was anything the middle managers could do to be more effective and the extent to which their activities were meeting expectations. These semi-structured interviews also served the purpose of undertaking a micro-level probe into the extent to which executives felt middle managers contributed to strategy.

Phase 3: interviews April 2014 to July 2014

The second phase of interviews informed a third phase of 10 follow-up interviews that were convened with the middle managers in the HIA project between April and July 2014. The purpose of these was to probe their purposeful activities through more specific questions that had been informed by the responses provided by executives in the second phase. Questions related to attempts of the middle

managers to sell issues upwards and outwards. The interviewers were semi-structured and lasted for about an hours' duration and were conducted at the interviewees' workplace. They comprised a range of semi-structured questions relating to the perceptions of middle managers on their strategic activities and their involvement in gaining the support of top tier managers and in liaising with external organizations. The topic guide (please see appendix E for example) contained questions that focused on what middle managers felt they were doing to engage with top tier and external executives and where they felt they could be more effective. These included exploring their perceptions on what helped and what got in the way together with what they felt they had specifically achieved in terms of gaining buy-in from the executives. These questions also sought to ascertain the effectiveness of the activities of middle managers in terms of taking measures to sustain the long-term viability of the HIA project.

These activities are summarised in table 4.

Table 4: Summary of data collected

Activity	2012	2013	2014	2015
Documentary Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 scoping documents • 3 minutes from meetings • 2 Measures performance reports • 1 budget sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Scoping documents • 6 minutes from meetings • 4 measures and performance reports • 4 budget sheets • 4 risk registers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4scoping documents • 7 minutes from meetings • 4 measures and performance reports • 4 budget sheets • 3 risk registers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 scoping documents • 5 minutes from meetings • 4 measures and performance reports • 1 risk register

Activity	2012	2013	2014	2015
Meetings observations (HIA Project team meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July (Initial scoping meeting – 2 hours) • September (2 hours) • September (2 hours) • November – (2 hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January (2 hours) • February (2 hours) • April (2 hours) • May (2 hours) • June (Workshop - 6 hours) • July (2 hours) • August (2 hours) • October (2 hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January (2 hours) • March (2 hours) • August (2 hours) • October (2 hours) • November (2 hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January (2 hours) • March (2 hours) • April (2 hours) • May (2 hours) • June (2 hours)
Semi structured interviews (each lasting in excess of 1 hours duration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 middle managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 middle managers • 5 corporate executives • 4 external executives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 middle managers • 1 corporate executive • 3 external executives 	

5.7 Analysis

5.7.1 Initial considerations

The research commenced with an exploration into the broad concepts associated with the activities of the middle managers as they attempted to sell issues (Dutton and Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001, 1997) upwards and outwards. An initial analysis of interview transcripts, documentation and meeting observations revealed that this way of working was attributable to the fact that the activities of the middle managers were less reactive and this was driving the intervention. Accordingly there was a requirement to formulate this into a theoretical framework using inference to

the best explanation (IBE) (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010) to compare the possible theoretical explanations that could be driving the process:

‘In IBE the researcher selects the “best” out of a shortlist of plausible explanations based on considerations of epistemic virtues, such as simplicity or novelty.’
(Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010: 330).

This activity induced an understanding of the problem to require institutional work (Lawrence, et al., 2011, 2009; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006,) to operationalise this intervention. Institutional work explores the ways in which reflexive actors negotiate their environment by purposefully creating, maintaining and changing institutions (Suddaby et al., 2013) through their “intelligent situated action” (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006: 219). Institutional work also links human agency to the contribution of individuals and organizations that effect organizational change (Battilana and D’Aunno, 2009). By moving agency to the middle ground of institutional theory (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) traditional assumptions about structure and its impact on the individual activity are relaxed. Instead “embedded agency” (Holm, 1995; Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Seo and Creed, 2002) provides a means of observing ‘how actors whose thoughts and actions are constrained by institutions are nevertheless able to work to effect those institutions’ (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010: 189). Institutional work also endorses Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) view of institutions as emergent processes.

5.7.2 Applying theory to the analysis

The focus of this study was on the institutional work of middle managers as they championed ideas upwardly and outwardly. Practices were also considered within the structures of the three institutional pillars (Scott, 1995):

- (i) cognitive pillars associating comprehensibility, taken for grantedness and a logic of orthodoxy
- (ii) normative pillars linking social obligations and moral standards that actors are obliged to follow
- (iii) regulative pillars identifying laws, rules and sanctions for deviation actors are subjected to (Zietsma and McKnight, 2009).

Following the concept of progressive focusing (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976, Stake, 1995) this inductive approach enabled theory to reveal itself through the data in keeping with its framing in a case study (Siggelkow, 2007).

The analysis of the data involved empirical research into the micro-level activities of institutional work (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010) impacting on the activities of middle managers in their issue-selling activities. Accordingly this adopted an inductive theory building approach (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012; Reay et al., 2006) exploring the efforts of middle managers as they engaged in issue selling. An interpretative research based approach guided the analysis of the qualitative data (Myers, 2009). This involved an 'iterative meaning making process' (Golden Biddle and Locke, 1997: 24) utilising inductive and deductive reasoning travelling to and from the different sources of data and theory (Locke, 2001; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The process commenced with an in-depth reading of the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) outlining categories and themes (Reay et al., 2006) on activities associated with issue selling. The subsequent analysis of institutional work data explored the specific examples of institutional work outlined in key theoretical literature (Currie et al., 2012; Lawrence et al., 2011, 2009; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010). Examples of institutional work were not, therefore, explicitly discussed during the course of the interviews. Instead these were expected to emerge through careful examination of the responses in the data analysis (Currie et al., 2012).

5.7.3 Focus

The analytical focus was emergent and became more and more apparent during the research activity. An inductive approach enabling theory to reveal itself through the data was in keeping with the choice to deploy case studies (Siggelkow, 2007). The subsequent analysis of institutional work was based on a modification of the research focus in the course of the data collection and an interpretation of the interviews (Currie et al., 2012) and followed the concept of progressive focusing (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976). Using a similar approach to that adopted by Currie et al., (2012) examples of institutional work were established but were never explicitly referred to during the course of the interviews. Therefore, deliberate attempts were taken to ensure that no questions related to a specific category of institutional work. Instead the intention was for types of institutional work to emerge from the responses given. This meant that responses were gleaned after second interviews. The latter

interviews facilitated the exploration of in-depth examples of types of institutional work.

5.7.4 Coding data

Initial coding of data commenced by assembling the documents, field notes and interview transcripts into a single data file (Currie et al., 2012). The analysis of the data followed a series of stages. Initially data was coded for the type of institutional work for creation and maintenance outlined by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006). Data was then progressively focused (Stake, 1995) on the actors who were undertaking the institutional work coding them for either their status within the internal organizational hierarchy or for their ability to influence decisions in the external environment.

The next stage was to consolidate codes across the case study in an iterative fashion utilizing techniques suggested by Grbich (2007). This sought meaning and developed interpretive explanations through feedback; collecting data and subjecting this to critically reflect processes of preliminary data analyses to determine what was going on and building up a picture of the emerging data. This was utilized in the next set of data emerging for guidance in the next set of data collection and this was repeated until the accumulated findings indicated that nothing new was likely to emerge and that the research question had been answered. This approach also used inductive and deductive reasoning travelling to and from data and theory to gain an understanding of the types of institutional work that were linked to creation and

maintenance and the internal and external status of the actors undertaking the institutional work (Locke, 2001; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The theoretical arguments that emerged were associated with the relationship between theory and data utilizing an analysis of activities within the case study (Eisenhardt, 1989).

5.8 Conclusion

The research design adopted for this thesis satisfies the expectations of making academic and theoretical contributions to the strategic activity of middle managers aligned with their activities in their endeavours to sell issues upwards and outwards. It needed to adopt a methodology that explored how middle managers used types of institutional work to explore these activities. This involved the utilization of the research methods of documentary analysis, observations and semi-structured interviews. These were then framed within a case study to conduct an in-depth investigation using a variety of sources. The analysis of the collected data sources utilised the lens of institutional work to identify the purposeful activities of middle managers as they engaged in the activities of issue selling. These practices were also considered within the three institutional pillars: regulatory, cultural-cognitive and normative (Scott, 1995).

Chapter 6 - Selling Issues Upwards

6.1 Introduction

This data analysis chapter provides a focus on the way middle managers (MMs) engage in issue selling upwards towards corporate and political executives. It considers how MM's enacted institutional work within the regulatory and cultural-cognitive institutional pillars (Scott, 1995, Zietsma and McKnight, 2009). The institutional pillars are utilised as a basis for exploring the way MMs developed practices for engaging with corporate and political executives in selling issues upwards.

MM's utilized the activity of proving to provide updates on the home improvement agency (HIA) project activities through scrutiny mechanisms and to demonstrate its benefits at regularly established meetings. The visibility of the progress of HIA project activities was also evidenced through formalised reporting procedures. All of these activities contributed to the overall objective of aligning the HIA projects activities in order to secure their acceptance and to sustain their longer-term viability. MMs were observed to be raising awareness in order to alert corporate and political executives to the concept of the HIA. These activities included extolling its benefits, encouraging investment and enlisting their support as allies to support its activities. The HIA project was aligned as a viable activity within service areas by interpreting and proving activities. MMs utilized the activity of interpreting to exploit informal opportunities and provide clarification to maintain effective

relationships. The promotion of good news stories and clarifying activities within strategic priorities also provided opportunities for MMs to provide an ongoing interpretation of HIA project activities for corporate and political executives.

6.2 Proving

MMs were observed to be keen to prove their activities to corporate and political executives. This was mainly evidenced as they provided an update on their progress at formal meetings including scrutiny mechanisms by briefing the portfolio holder (political executive) prior to meetings. This included tailoring their approach to manage issues of contention. The process of proving was also enhanced through the development of a service plan that was aligned to the strategic priorities for the local authority. The demonstration of the benefits of HIA project activities at regularly established meetings provided opportunities for MMs to update elected members, political executive, at formal meetings. Reports on progress at management meetings also served to alert corporate executives of progress. Visibility of progress during formalized reporting procedures involved the use of concise reports to champion success. Reports also linked HIA activities to an outcomes framework and provided concise information that was directly relevant to the HIA project activities. These activities are summarised in table 5.

Table 5: Activities associated with proving

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
I have worked very closely with my portfolio holder on this and I think the wider council needs to have more of a democratic approach in engagement within this new and changing world.(MM1b)	Briefing portfolio holder prior to meeting	Formal updating on progress	Proving
That is why we have badged it up as a pilot because people [political executives] are comfortable with pilots. They understand what these mean.(MM6B)	Tailoring approach to manage issues of contention		
I know these are the priorities for my organization and that when I am doing my service plan the services that I am delivering have to meet those objectives or more than one of those objectives because that is the only way that I will sustain my funding. '(MM4b)	Developing a service plan aligned to strategic priorities		
Field note 51: 06/06/13 highlights the need to explain the benefits of the HIA project by simplifying its intentions through the use of plain English and clearly signposted language. This was necessary to emphasise the rationale for local authorities to work in partnership in order to deliver integrated service delivery.	Updating elected members at formal meetings	Demonstrating benefits / drawbacks	
'Obviously I use my influence here at my extended management team meetings, the [corporate executive] here chairs that meeting he will then go to his chief executive meetings and then it all just feeds through. So it is almost drip drip drip isn't it?'(MM8B)	Reporting on progress at top management meetings		
Field note 147: 25/07/14 observes MMs discussing the importance of producing information that demonstrates their accountabilities for HIA project activities. This was deemed necessary in order to allay concerns from political executives.	Using concise reports to champion success	Regular reporting procedures	
'I can use parts of those [outcomes-frameworks] very effective with some of my stakeholders like member[political executives] and the senior management team, the Chief Executive Officer and our top tier[corporate executives]. Different parts of those outcomes frameworks speak to different stakeholders in different ways.' (MM1b)	Linking HIA activities to an outcomes framework		
'You are never going to get people [corporate and political executives] on board with it unless they can see with their own eyes things has been changed for the better' (MM7a).	Providing information that is directly relevant		

6.2.1 Formal updating on progress

Middle managers provided an update on progress by through briefing their portfolio holder, political executive, prior to meetings, tailoring approaches to manage issues of contention and developing a service plan aligned to strategic priorities. Interviews

with corporate executives provided evidence how MMs had formally updated them on progress. These interviews served to make the corporate executive fully aware of the achievements that were being made by the HIA project. This was evident in responses from corporate executives that extolled the benefits of the activities that had been put in place to streamline service-delivery:

We had a poor delivering service, which is now pretty good. The fact that we have been through the lean systems process seems to have worked. It is more efficient. My understanding is the customers are happy with it because the turnaround time is quicker so it does meet our expectations. It is one of our success stories really (CE2).

The following sections explore the way MMs were purposeful in actively engaging in activities of formally updating corporate and political executives.

Briefing portfolio holder prior to meetings

The activity of ensuring the support from elected members, who formed an integral part of the echelon of political executives, was a key factor in the proving the effectiveness of HIA project activities. This was achieved through the development and maintenance of a special relationship that would maximise the likelihood of securing their agreement to issues that were subject to the formalised scrutiny processes:

I have worked very closely with my portfolio holder on this and I think the wider council needs to have more of a democratic approach in engagement within this new and changing world. That is what I am trying to do through the scrutiny process. (MM1b).

This example illustrates the purposeful efforts of the MM to develop a personal relationship with their portfolio holder as the lead elected member for their service area. In this way the development of an egalitarian relationship proved beneficial to sustaining buy and that scrutiny process as a well-established mechanism for monitoring service area activities supported this process.

MMs were committed to utilising their experience of previous encounters with political executives as a means of encouraging them to make an investment in the HIA project. The advocating of the benefits HIA activities could be conceived as a skilfully manipulated activity based on the exploiting of previous experiences that could be utilised to maximise the likelihood of gaining their support:

One of the things I have learned about the environment here over the years is that [success is limited] if you ask people [political executives] to make too many decisions at once. Say you had got to make five decisions by gaining the support from five people in the room. If you ask them to make one decision then probably you will get a majority in favour of that one decision. If you ask them to make five decisions one of those people will have a problem with each of those five decisions. So you have got five decisions and five people who are uncomfortable with the five decisions. So nobody is in favour of all of it. That is then a problem and I have experienced that previously. You need to have a developed sense of people's nervousness around decisions and the dynamics within groups. Because people can think that the majority is fine but they always focus on what they are uncomfortable with (MM6b).

In this example the MM had been determined to utilise previous experience to ensure a better chance of gaining the support of political executives into HIA project activities. The purposeful behaviour of the MM was demonstrated by their awareness that success was more likely to be achieved if political executives only had to decide on one issue at a time rather than making them feel that they were being forced to agree a number of options.

Field note 49: 06/06/13 highlights how MMs took proactive steps to brief political executives on the draft HIA business case that had been produced by the project team. This was felt necessary to secure their engagement and provided the opportunity to ensure that any strategic issues were addressed prior to securing formal sign off of the document.

Tailoring approach to manage issues of contention

Scrutiny activities also provided MMs with the opportunity to champion new ideas through the development of a dedicated association with the corporate and political executives. This was utilised as a means of pre-empting areas of possible contention through the tailoring of an approach that was likely to meet with success:

That is why we have badged it up as a pilot because people [political executives] are comfortable with pilots. They understand what these mean. There is no way we can go back I would have to rebuild the whole team and employ new people and set up new procedures. There is no way of going back so I hope we do not

have to but pilot was the only way of making any progress. Because they [political executives] feel reassured that they can bring it back in-house, they can deliver it themselves. Ultimately this is an experiment and there is limited risk. The reality is there is a lot of risk because there is nothing else. It is not like you have got ten people just sat here waiting to do it again if it fails it will not happen (MM6b).

This example demonstrates how the MM understood the complexity of gaining approval and worked with determination to gain the acceptance of new ideas through the manipulation of the scrutiny process. The fact that the MM was aware that piloted activities were more likely to achieve a successful outcome illustrates how this worked in practice. Its acceptance with elected members as powerful political executives meant that the MM was able to proceed with gaining acceptance to the HIA initiative. The use of a get-out clause was particularly effective in suggesting that the HIA project was operating on a pilot basis. This enabled the MM to gain agreement with the MM's full awareness that the realistic option of bringing the service back in house would be very difficult to achieve.

Field note 1: 04/09/12 observed MMs discussing the importance of a positive message for political executives at a HIA project team meeting. This demonstrated the emphasis placed on allaying political concerns relating to the integrated model of service delivery emanating from the draft business case.

Developing a service plan aligned to strategic priorities

MMs were keen to gain the continued support by ensuring that they political executives were asked to take decisions based on facts that substantiated the argument of MMs. This was necessary to avoid the risk of destroying the trust that had been built up in their existing relationship. The following example demonstrates how the MM took efforts to ensure that political executives were not being forced to take undue risks:

My experience and suggest that it was too much yes. And that was my line at the board. I am quite happy to go back them [political executives] when I can say look isn't this performing well and here is a business case. I am not too bothered about that. But I think a leap of faith which is effectively what I have taken albeit informed by what has happened in the [another region of the county] and a business case committing them to do things that they might be nervous about I think it offers too many opportunities for people to be uncomfortable (MM6b).

This example demonstrates the careful judgement that the MM made when dealing with a request from the HIA board, comprising MMs from other local authorities, to obtain sign off within their own individual local authority to the HIA business case. The MM decided not to accede to the request from the integrated partnership on the basis that it asked political executives to sign up to principles that they were unlikely to agree to. The risk of obtaining approval to a document that contained too much uncertainty was, therefore, deemed by the MM as an inappropriate course of action to take. This risked jeopardising the special relationship that had been developed by the MM that was built on gaining their trust.

Field note 4: 28/09/12 observed MMs discussing a range of alternatives relating to where they needed to obtain sign off for the draft business case. This related to the importance for MMs to obtain approval to provide verification that the HIA project met the strategic objectives of their individual local authorities.

The objective of maintaining a relationship with corporate executives that would ensure their continued support involved demonstrating that the HIA project matched corporate priorities:

I know these are the priorities for my organization and that when I am doing my service plan the services that I am delivering have to meet those objectives or more than one of those objectives because that is the only way that I will sustain my funding (MM4b).

This example demonstrates how the MM ensured that formal documentation relating to the HIA project could be utilized to prove that it could meet the overall purpose of what had been agreed by corporate executives for the whole organization.

Field note 205: 27/03/15 highlights the need for MMs to provide evidence of what the HIA project was able to achieve. This was defined in terms of improvements to performance through the provision of statistics relating to what the service was able to deliver before and after measures to streamline service delivery had been implemented.

6.2.2 Demonstrating benefits / drawbacks

The demonstration of the benefits of HIA project activities at regularly established meetings provided opportunities for MMs to update elected members. This would subsequently make it easy to gain their commitment at formal meetings. The following example provided by an interview with a corporate executive demonstrates how the purposeful endeavours of the MM had escalated the intended benefits of the HIA project to the highest levels within the local authority:

I was in a very difficult meeting with the leader, the portfolio holder [political executives] and [the MM responsible for the HIA project]. It was a few months ago where it has been raised at the highest levels of leadership within the authority. The home improvement agency it has got to be the way to make us more effective and efficient in delivering this service (CE5).

The following sections provide illustrations of how MMs engaged in activities that demonstrated how the streamlining of steps taken to deliver home adaptations at internal meetings.

Updating elected members at formal meetings

MMs regularly updated political executives at established meetings in order to keep them updated on issues to sustain their buy-in to the achievements of HIA project activities:

I think it is important there are various forums where those discussions could happen. I think it is keeping our portfolio holders informed and I think this is fundamental to understanding what we are doing (MM4a).

This example shows that the MM had identified formal meetings as being beneficial vehicles for providing updates and raising the awareness of the successes of HIA project activities towards political executives.

Field note 51: 06/06/13 highlights the need to explain the benefits of the HIA project by simplifying its intentions through the use of plain English and clearly signposted language. This was necessary to emphasise the rationale for local authorities to work in partnership in order to deliver integrated service delivery.

Formal meetings, therefore, provided MMs with an opportunity to utilise presentations at formal briefings for the championing of HIA activities. These were undertaken with an awareness that there was a requirement to provide evidence relating to its effectiveness. This process was more likely to be successful if it could demonstrate accordance with the strategic objectives of the local authority:

If I went to them [elected members] and said “I’m going to change the culture and it is going to keep the service as it is and it is going to cost you more” they will throw me out of the window. I think even if I went to them and said “it is going to cost you more and the service is going to improve”. I think what they are looking from me is an improved service that won’t cost more. If I went to them and said “it is going to improve the service, it is not going to cost you more it is going to be round about the same”. I think they would not be overjoyed but they would expect me to come back and say “come on sharpen your pencil up there must be a way of doing this”. So the expectations are improve the service, change the culture and do it for less (MM3a).

The process of briefing members at formal meetings in this example was based on a process of building upon past experiences in order to secure a successful outcome.

The MM demonstrated awareness that the provision of information implying additional cost would not be readily accepted by elected members (political executives). Therefore, the message had to be carefully thought out in accordance with the ethos of the local authority attempting to deliver improvements to service-delivery. This needed to demonstrate achieving a positive culture change and the reduction of the overall cost of the service. It was also evident that because the MM was very familiar with the formal procedures for briefing political executives within the local authority, these provided windows of opportunities for gaining a positive result.

Field note 66: 06/06/15 observed MMs considering how best to brief political executives on potential dips in performance arising from taking people out of their usual roles in order to participate in HIA project activities. Another instance of these activities is observed in field note 145: 25/07/14 where MMs discussed the importance of determining the correct time to bring HIA activities to the attention of

political executives. This demonstrates how MMs deliberately decided to wait until there was sufficient evidence to prove its viability.

The updating of political executives on project activities via regularly established meetings had to be managed very skilfully in order to sustain their support:

There was no way that members were going for anything more than a case based on resilience and improved services that stage. To put the business case in front of them it complicates the decision-making for them because there are a lot of commitments in there. I think members looking at those commitments individually would have been comfortable with them. Individually but not all of them together (MM6b).

This example highlights how MMs were able to pre-empt the key factors of importance as proof that the HIA intervention could demonstrate its resilience and deliver an improvement to services. It was important to maintain the support of political executives before asking them to reach agreement and this would not be achieved if they were expected to agree to numerous obligations. Instead the tactic that was effectively employed by the MM was to break the agreements to individual aspects. The commitment to building up a dedicated association with political executives also paid off because this enabled the MM to pre-empt what was likely to be acceptable.

Field note 32: 31/05/13 observed MMs discussing concerns about how to obtain sign up to the HIA business case without sufficient evidence to prove this to members.

The need to be purposeful in these endeavours was exacerbated by the internal financial difficulties being experienced by local authorities.

In maintaining their commitment to sustain buy-in from political executives MMs ensured that HIA activities were only raised at regular meetings where this was appropriate:

Locally it is still a little bit early. If I went and told members [political executives] what we were doing with the home improvement agency it would be an ambition rather than a reality. (MM6b).

This example demonstrates how the MM was keen to update political executives on HIA activities only when there was enough evidence to warrant this intervention.

Reporting on progress at top management meetings

Reporting the outcomes of professional service-delivery achieved by MMs within their service area was a well-established activity. The main method of reporting used by MMs was to report back at top management team meetings:

Generally speaking we are up at a senior enough level within our organizations to be able to keep it going. It is unlikely that you are going to have [corporate executives] saying stop doing that and part of the greater mitigation against the chances of that

happening are people will be doing as I am doing which is going to the corporate management team and providing updates all the time regularly along the lines of “this is going well, this our improvement so to some extent we have got our own responsibility to drive this forward” (MM1b).

It was evident from this example that while MMs had been given the overall autonomy to decide how the HIA service should operate it was also necessary to sustain the internal support of the corporate executives. This was achieved by presenting positive reports to prove its ongoing progress to the top management team meetings, which were a well-established mechanism for providing information that supported progress. MMs were also aware of the purpose of their activities in ensuring that the HIA project was driven forward as part of the overall strategic activity within their local authority.

Field note 54: 06/06/13 observed the importance MMs placed on being committed to demonstrating what was being delivered by HIA activities. These activities were assisted through the development of in depth knowledge of supporting data in order to challenge the status quo.

In order to be effective the activity of reporting successes and achievements was identified by MMs as a process that needed to be continuously maintained:

Obviously I use my influence here at my extended management team meetings, the [corporate executive] here chairs that meeting he will then go to his chief executive meetings and then it all just feeds through. So it is almost drip drip drip drip isn't it?

Constantly saying this is what we are doing and this is what we could do better if we worked at it differently ... but I am sure at a local level anyway that is starting to change anyway. That people know that the home improvement agency is there and that they can feed into it (MM8b).

This example demonstrates how the MM was using extended management team meetings to continuously update the corporate executives on the activities of the HIA project team. It was also evident that the success of this activity relied upon the steadfastness of the MM in persisting with this process to provide proof of the successful activities of the HIA project team.

Field note 24: 26/04/13 observed how MMs emphasised the need to highlight how the HIA project made the best use of scarce resources through an integrated service delivery model. It was very important for MMs to emphasise that this had been derived through an effective partnership with other local authorities. Key benefits included reducing confusion and duplication with the intention of demonstrating a seamless customer journey assisted by identifying and minimising costly bottlenecks.

MMs were also determined in their efforts to take advantage of regularly established meetings to champion HIA activities within the regulatory framework of their individual local authority. The success of this activity was reliant on the ability of the MM to ensure that the profile of the HIA initiative was maintained:

You would play it accordingly so I might take it to my group leadership team with the [corporate executive] there so that we could reach agreement and all be happy with the model. If we were not it might need to go to cabinet [requiring approval from political executives] (MM 5b).

This example illustrates how the MM had carefully thought out which meetings would provide the appropriate opportunity to raise the profile of the HIA initiative with corporate and political executives. The process of gaining endorsement from corporate and political executives by raising the profile of activities undertaken was also subject to its own process of escalation where cabinet meetings could be utilised to gain the ultimate sanction of approval when this was necessary.

Field note 120: 28/03/14 observed MMs discussing the importance of making a case for HIA project activities and proving outcomes in terms of improved use of funding and benefits to service users.

MMs also provided regular updates on the progress of the HIA project activities at meetings that were convened to review activities in service areas. This involved the MM purposefully pitching the successes of HIA project activities against other projects that were competing for funding:

You have to constantly review the situation and prove that your service [the HIA project] is worth its weight against other services (MM 8b)

This process could be seen to follow a regular pattern as part of services review meetings within the annual planning cycle:

What can we do to be better between us as [6 local authorities] and articulate this to our joint teams [corporate and political executives]? How do they fit into the business model? What is their role? All of these things are things that affect that and might indicate whether or not that is working quite as well as it should be (MM5a).

This provides a good example of how the MM had gauged an awareness of the business-planning process and how it could be orchestrated to demonstrate the ways in which the HIA project could best meet the needs of the corporate business model. This would then lead to improvements that would demonstrate the value of the HIA project to corporate and political executives and sustain their support.

Field note 130: 28/03/14 observed MMs discussing the importance of skills necessary to pitch the HIA project specification in order to sustain its viability.

MMs were also motivated to supplement their activities of gaining the support of corporate executives through informal meetings:

What we do with regard to the [corporate executives] I think that relationship is then less formal on an individual basis and more formal in our normal corporate management team meetings. So I keep our [corporate executives] up-to-date outside our corporate management team meetings (MM8b).

This example demonstrates how the MM had made the conscious decision to hold informal meetings outside the formal ones in order to prove the successful performance of the HIA's activities. This process was driven by intent to demonstrate why it was important to gain support for aspects of the project as it moved forward.

6.2.3 Regular reporting procedures

The visibility of progress through formalized reporting procedures used concise reports to champion success, linking HIA activities to an outcomes-framework and providing concise information that was directly relevant to the HIA project activities. Interviews with corporate executives revealed the integral role MMs played in demonstrating the benefits of streamlined service-delivery at high-level meetings. It was evident from interviews with corporate executives that MMs were very keen to ensure that corporate and political executives were updated on HIA project activities through formalized reporting procedures:

What [the MM responsible for the HIA service] does is provide regular updates to members [political executives] through a policy panel and [the MM] provides regular updates to that group. [The MM] also keeps the portfolio holder [corporate executive] that covers housing in the loop as well. Periodically we have updates at management team (CE6).

The following sections provide examples of how MMs use formalized reporting procedures to ensure that proof is provided on the ability of

activities to streamline steps taken to deliver home adaptations to achieve efficiencies.

Using concise reports to champion success

MMs ensured that the profile of the HIA project was sustained through the provision of evidence that could demonstrate its benefits:

The story of success is less clear and that is what I have said several times at board we need to say what is different as a result of what we have done so far very clearly ideally on one side of A4... So that people [corporate and political executives] can see quickly what the benefits are, what has been achieved to date, what the future story is, what we are trying to do and what our offer is (MM5b).

This example demonstrates how careful thought had been given on what would be the most appropriate method to make corporate and political executives aware of the achievements of the HIA project. It demonstrates an awareness of the necessity to present information very concisely to enable corporate and political executives to quickly absorb this information. These activities could be seen as a continual process of proving achievements in order to sustain viability.

Field note 147: 25/07/14 provides a useful observation of MMs discussing the importance of producing information that demonstrated their accountabilities

for HIA project activities. This was deemed necessary in order to allay concerns from political executives through the provision of evidence that supported improvements to the delivery of home adaptations for service users.

Linking HIA activities to an outcomes framework

Reporting activities were also linked to outcomes-frameworks. MMs were able to use these to promote evidence relating to the longer-term benefits of the HIA project to corporate and political executives:

I can use parts of those [outcomes-frameworks] very effective with some of my stakeholders like member[political executives] and the senior management team, the Chief Executive Officer and our top tier[corporate executives]. Different parts of those outcomes frameworks speak to different stakeholders in different ways but the degree to which these are powerful I think you have got to speak to different stakeholders really and see what they value. It might be, and I am speculating, that it is [the HIA project] is so well-developed that even the most impartial observer can see that we have got an awful lot of understanding of the system. I think that is quite reassuring (MM1b).

The MM in this example was able to utilise the outcomes-frameworks as evidence that could be exploited in meetings with corporate and political executives. It was apparent that there was a necessity to satisfy more than one stakeholder and the process of issue-selling was linked to the specific values that were important to each stakeholder group. Feedback from these groups also provided an indication to the MM as to how well the HIA project-activities were performing.

Field note 151: 29/08/14 endorses these activities through the observation of MMs discussing the need for a financial work package. This was deemed necessary to provide a deeper understanding of the funding arrangements and the sharing of costs benefits.

MMs were also actively involved in producing information that could be tailored to meet the requirements of specific formal meetings. This activity was seen as being integral to the reporting procedure:

The quarterly reports have been quite good at that. However, they are a bit bulky so what they need is an executive summary in order that a communication statement can be sent out to everybody [corporate and political executives] (MM5b).

In this example the MM had gained an awareness of what type of report would have the maximum amount of impact and was therefore more likely to gain the approval of the corporate and political executives at a formal meeting. MM were aware of the benefits of presenting concise information in order to draw attention to the key issues and provide an indication of where approval was needed.

Field note 77: 30/08/13 observed MMs involved in discussions of the legal aspects of the integrated partnership between the local authorities. This highlighted the need to seek advice from legal, finance, procurement and

health and safety in order to secure a multi agency team agreement. This also demonstrated the purposefulness of MMs in ensuring that their activities complied with the necessary statutory requirements.

Providing information that is directly relevant

MMs were aware of the need to utilise information in reports that they submitted to formal meetings to specifically aim these at the specific strategic requirements of their individual local authority:

Members [political executives] down here don't give a monkey's about what's going on elsewhere. That is contextual at best. They need quarterly reports ... that demonstrate that performance is good, better than it was before and that it is improving (MM6b).

This example demonstrates how the MM had gained an astute awareness of what would be acceptable for elected members and how this should be presented. It was evident that because information presented via the established channels had evolved over a long period of time it was easier for the MM to present information in a format that was likely to gain approval.

Field note 203: 27/03/15 observed MMs discussing the importance of providing evidence for political executives to demonstrate that the HIA project team was delivering improvements to service delivery. This highlights a

necessity to provide a range of options to address potential problems associated with feelings from political executives that they might be being forced into accepting a pre ordained decision.

The requirement to provide information that would support HIA project activities was seen as being vitally important:

I think from my point of view that one of the things I struggle with is having that evidence on paper that this is what it has achieved. You know the performance-measures that is something I have grumbled about constantly in recent months. Not because I don't believe it is not moving forward and it's achieving because it clearly is. But you are never going to get people [corporate and political executives] on board with it unless they can see with their own eyes things has been changed for the better (MM7a).

In this example the MM emphasised the requirement for sufficient evidence that could be put down on paper to support its progress. A lack of adequate documentation would therefore be extremely detrimental to the ability to secure the continued support of corporate and political executives. Information needed to absolutely prove the successes that had been achieved through HIA project activities.

Field note 87: 30/08/13 observed discussions between MMs concerning clarifying the accuracy of end to end times and measuring the commencement and completion of a home adaptation. This fed into the production of information that represented reductions in the time taken to deliver home adaptations to service users. In turn this

information was used as proof of progress for future meetings with corporate and political executives.

This requirement to be proactive in the production of information to support issue-selling was also endorsed by another MM:

We have to have metrics that back that up and we have to demonstrate that each of the components of what we do does add value (MM6b).

The requirement for robust information that could support the positive aspects of HIA activities was considered to be a vital requirement for meetings with influential corporate and political executives:

For me personally there has got to be a lot more work done around the evidence base to show what has been achieved. That process is not as robust as it needs to be. The reason why is because we do not have the resources that we did have when we originally started so that is difficult (MM7a).

In this example the requirement for documentation that could point to the achievements of the HIA project was balanced against the lack of resources within the HIA project team to produce this. In this example the MM was persevering with the issue of gaining sufficient proof of success because of its importance to sustaining buy-in to the project. However, this activity had to be balanced with the resources that were currently available.

Efforts by MMs to obtain data that supported HIA project activities was provided through a quarterly report. The report was produced to ensure that an update on the achievements that had taken place was provided four times a year.

I think aspects of it are shown in the Quarter 1 report because the whole point of the work we are doing is to deliver savings and better outcomes for the people we support. I don't know if you've seen the Quarter 1 report but that shows things like the reduction in times people have had to wait to get their adaptation in place (MM5a).

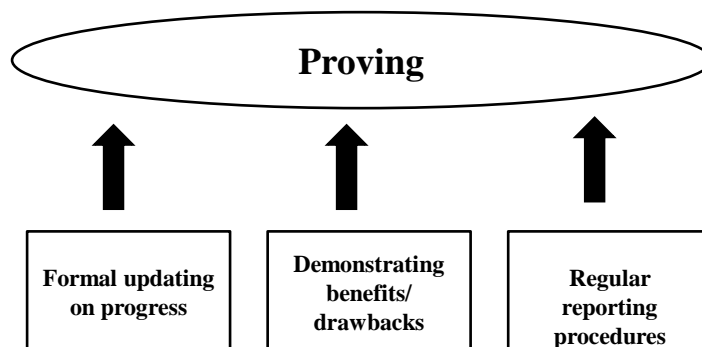
This example demonstrates how MMs had decided on a reporting mechanism that would accord with the accountability expected within the formalised procedure. This was based upon mechanisms for reporting on progress that was expected by their local authority.

Observations of HIA project board meetings also highlighted how the project activities were regulated by the necessity to refer back to corporate and political executives for final approval. In particular, a risk log was produced and maintained in order to identify and record outstanding issues requiring attention. Emphasis was placed by MMs on obtaining funding to continue with the HIA project. This activity was contingent on being successful in bids from corporate executives and a need to comply with legal aspects of the project partnership.

The HIA project was also continuously measured for its effectiveness on the basis of its ability to deliver timely home adaptations through a collaboration of local authorities across the county. MMs were able to evidence the effectiveness of their activities via a report, which was produced on a quarterly basis that measured progress and performance. The quarterly reports was used to provide a consistent tool for measuring improvements over time. The report specifically focused on the outcomes that had been achieved for the customer and the value that was being achieved through the average cost of an adaptation.

Figure 1 provides an overview of how MMs engaged with political and corporate executives upwardly through proving activities. This draws upon the second order and third order coding.

Figure 1: Activities associated with proving



6.3 Raising Awareness

MMs were observed to be raising the awareness of corporate and political executives to their activities through extolling the benefits of new ways of working. These activities involved them demonstrating the achievements of partnership-working, highlighting improvements in quality and associating their activities with corporate priorities. MMs were also keen to encourage corporate and political executives to provide their backing for the HIA project through raising awareness of its activities, managing the decision-making process by exploiting previous experiences and using pragmatism. Active steps were taken by MMs to enlist corporate and political executives as allies to support HIA project activities. These comprised extending support through endeavours that advocated its benefits, improving visibility amongst stakeholders and developing a strategy for engagement. These activities are summarised in table 6.

Table 6: Activities to raise awareness

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
This is a good example of integrated working... which is the big political move at the moment. It is a good example of how organizations in the county are trying to stay together and deliver something and not walk away from the table even when it gets difficult.(MM5b)	Demonstrating achievements	Opportunities to demonstrate new ways of working	Raising Awareness
It shows that working as one strategically is a really good move. And then actually saying what difference can we make to improve the quality of services and encourage people to be as independent as possible and to have a sustainable future (MM4b).	Highlighting improvements in quality		
We embedded into everybody the philosophy of how to do that by taking everything from the customer and when everybody came up for air they went "Jesus we now understand it we can talk to each other in the same language". That is the basis for moving on in the experiment. (MM1a)	Associating with corporate priorities		
Field note 64: 06/06/13 observes MMs constructing a series of messages to advocate the benefits of delivering home adaptations by delivering streamlined services through an integrated partnership of local authorities. These activities are able to be used by MMs to extol the benefits of the HIA project on the basis that can be achieved.	Challenging established ways of working		

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
Field note 6: 30/11/12 detailed observation at HIA board meeting where MMs discussed protocols for obtaining sign-off for the business case within their respective local authority. Protocols for sign-off ranged from briefing the chief executive; gaining approval from the portfolio holder, political executive, and possible referral to scrutiny; seeking approval from housing subcommittee and approval or ultimately gaining sanction from full cabinet.	Providing supporting information	Endeavours to secure backing	Raising awareness
Say you had got to make five decisions by gaining the support from five people in the room. If you ask them to make one decision then probably you will get a majority in favour of that one decision. If you ask them to make five decisions one of those people will have a problem with each of those five decisions. (MM6b)	Managing decision making		
Reading between the lines I think there is hope amongst some of [the local authorities] in the HIA partnership at least that [a local authority] would give more money on the basis of certain successes. I think that is unlikely (a) because of the size of the savings required by [this Local Authority] and (b) because the other side of this argument is this is what we should be doing anyway.(MM5b)	Using pragmatism		
Field note 179: 30/01/15 observes discussions between MMs about potential changes to portfolio holders (political executives) in the forthcoming local elections of May that year. Conversations centred around the need to prepare for this and ensure that the profile of the HIA project was brought to the attention of new political executives as soon as possible.	Extending support	Enlisting allies	
Strategically I think we are lacking the profile with the influencers. So we are not visible with our elected members and maybe chief executives. I think the HIA board should take more responsibility for those discussions and involvement (MM4a).	Improving visibility for stakeholders		
Field note 195: 27/03/15 observes MMs discussing a draft project plan for home improvement development in terms of providing clarity for members and selling the advantages of the service. This was deemed necessary to allay any concerns from elected members	Developing a strategy for engagement		

6.3.1 Opportunities to demonstrate new ways of working

In extolling the benefits of new ways of working MMs became involved in demonstrating the achievements of partnership working, highlighting improvements in quality and associating their activities with corporate priorities. These activities were directed towards corporate and political executives. Interviews with corporate executives outlined their expectations on middle managers in bringing forward new ideas related to new ways of working. These were linked to an acknowledgement of the expertise of the MM within their service area. This was evident in the following

example, from an interview with a corporate executive, detailing the way a MM had effectively aligned the achievements of the HIA project to corporate expectations:

It is providing certainty to our budgets because clearly if you are waiting such a length of time. And I forget off hand how long the average waiting time was before. It was nearly a year I believe, 36 weeks or something like that, for someone to get a housing adaptation completed. Clearly from the budgetary point of view it is providing certainty. It is providing certainty to those contractors who are providing that service because if they can have a steady regular flow of work. And if it can be guaranteed then you are going to get a better schedule of rate (CE4).

The following sections consider the way MMs engaged in purposeful activities to extol the benefits of the new ways of working within the HIA project. This was necessary in order to raise awareness.

Demonstrating achievements

MMs were able to demonstrate to corporate and political executives that the HIA project was able to deliver benefits through integrating working arrangements achieved through a partnership with other local authorities:

This is a good example of integrated working... which is the big political move at the moment. It is a good example of how organizations in the county are trying to stay together and deliver something and not walk away from the table even when it gets difficult. It has a good story to tell in terms of reducing crisis for the people that we are trying to support by making sure that the

waiting lists are minimised and there is a timely response by the teams (MM5b).

This example highlights the political significance of delivering the integrated HIA service in partnership with other local authorities. It derives the benefit of gaining the necessary buy-in from corporate and political executives to enable support for the initiative. The fact that MMs from a number of different local authorities were persevering with the concept of working collectively was perceived as being a key bargaining tool. This would be used to encourage corporate and political executives to support the initiative of integration. The mechanisms that supported integrated-service-delivery were also predicated on the basis that partnership working would reduce the length of time that vulnerable individuals remained on waiting lists.

Field note 21: 26/04/13 observed discussions between MMs on delivering a collaborative approach to service delivery to co locate access to HIA's services through a model to reduce financial pressures on other activities. This provides an illustration of the efforts of MMs to achieve cost savings through a partnership approach. This model could then be used to demonstrate the viability of this approach to corporate and political executives.

Highlighting improvements to quality

MMs made corporate and political executives aware of the benefits of the HIA project by actively championing the improvements in quality that were being delivered through partnership working:

The first thing that I did was actually to say [to a corporate executive] don't look at this in isolation and the [corporate executive] said "no problem I really think that is a great idea and actually it provides evidence...of the benefits of integration and it shows that working as one strategically is a really good move. And then actually saying what difference can we make to improve the quality of services and encourage people to be as independent as possible and to have a sustainable future (MM4b).

In this example the MM focused the attention of the corporate executive the future of service-delivery that could be achieved through integrating activities between local authorities. The MM was able to project a very positive image relating to where vulnerable people as the customer could sustain their independence through a partnership of local authorities. This had been made possible through an effective joining-up of services. Therefore, this provided a good example of how MMs were able to successfully advocate the concept of institutional change through developing closer working arrangements with neighbouring authorities to improve the way services were undertaken.

Field note 10: 25/01/13 observed MMs discussing the requirement to maintain the support of corporate and political executives across local authorities. This related to the delivery of home adaptations on a partnership basis and the need to develop an

effective communication strategy. This could be utilised to demonstrate that improvements to quality had been achieved by proceeding on this basis.

Associating with corporate priorities

MMs were keen to deliver services that were closely associated with corporate priorities. The following example provides an illustration on how MMs were able to initiate a range of partners into the principles of a lean systems approach:

We got all of the districts and boroughs and all of the various people into a room and we sat down and said “right we are going to use lean systems methodology to examine the current customer journey”. We embedded into everybody the philosophy of how to do that by taking everything from the customer and when everybody came up for air they went “Jesus we now understand it we can talk to each other in the same language”. That is the basis for moving on in the experiment. What they have then done is try to talk to their managers about it. Where it has not been a lean systems thinking organization that has been a struggle because we have been talking in two different languages. You have got the language of lean systems versus, and it does seem to be versus, the language of traditional performance management (MM1a).

This example highlights that MMs within the HIA partnership could see the clear benefits of embracing the principles of lean systems management. However, there was the bigger challenge of convincing corporate and political executives of these perceived benefits. This was particularly challenging within local authorities that were not currently adopting this approach. The benefit of streamlining-steps being taken to deliver home adaptations was exemplified by fact that the MMs in the HIA

partnership could communicate effectively with members of their integrated HIA partnership on its advantages. The requirement of satisfying the expectations of corporate and political executives within individual local authorities proved to be a greater challenge. This was particularly challenging for MMs in local authorities with a culture that favoured stricter measurement of performance. In particular, MMs working in a culture that did not subscribe to lean systems thinking commonly had to champion the principles of lean systems as an alternative to performance indicators.

Field note 40: 06/06/ 13 highlights how MMs used lean systems thinking to assist them in making improvements to service delivery. This was used to demonstrate how this lead to improved services to customers. Associations with improvements to service delivery are also identified in field note 56: 06/06/13 where MMs actively worked to satisfy the needs of a corporate executive by demonstrating significant improvements to waiting times for home adaptations.

Challenging established ways of working

The culture in certain local authorities was to work to traditional principles of performance management. This presented a major challenge for MMs who wanted to sell new ways of service-delivery as an issue. This was because it meant challenging established methods of working and created a situation where the MM could be in conflict with their corporate and political executives:

Now one MM is in a difficult position of trying to teach the corporate executives in the local authority about it [the strategy adopted for the HIA project] who are still working in a performance indicator framework mentality which is everything must be done in 40 hours, phones should be answered within 5 rings (MM1a).

The MM in this example was expected to directly challenge the status quo, which required a great deal of resolution. It extended the upwards expectations of their role to undertake a purposeful intervention that would effect a fundamental change in thinking. This would involve an attempt to change the attitude of corporate and political executives towards traditional performance management. A further challenge was dealing with the likely strong resistance arising from trying to persuade corporate and political executives of its benefits. In particular, this activity was associated with a radical change to the way performance management was undertaken within the local authority.

Field note 64: 06/06/13 observed MMs constructing a series of messages to advocate the benefits of delivering home adaptations by delivering streamlined services through an integrated partnership of local authorities. This demonstrates activities that were able to be used by MMs to extol the benefits of the HIA project.

Nonetheless the MMs within the HIA partnership were observed as being very keen to sell the benefits of their change initiatives towards the HIA project. This was

necessary to achieve the required efficiencies that would justify the necessary investment of resources:

Now that is an anathema to us...and that's the battle we've now got with one Local Authority [in the HIA partnership] at the higher echelons is the "but it has got to be within 3 rings stuff". That is where we have moved on what the HIA partnership has achieved so far. It has also achieved that cultural change within key parts of the organization within which we work, but there is a long way to go still (MM1a).

The example here provides a demonstration of the determination of the MM to change the ingrained attitude of corporate and political executives. However, it was also acknowledged that this was a long-term challenge that would not happen instantaneously. The fact that the MM referred to this activity in adversarial terms describing it as a 'battle' provides an indication of their resolution to achieve eventual success. There was a strong conviction that lean-systems-thinking paved the way for streamlining the steps taken to install home adaptations. Arguments that supported the integration of services also required changes in culture. This gave more credence to their desire to achieve integration by encouraging corporate and political executives to stop using micro measuring performance in favour of a lean-systems approach.

There was also a firm commitment amongst MMs to extol the benefits of working in partnership across the county as a positive means of delivering the strategic objectives of the HIA project:

We have had to work both with our executive teams and with our members to get everybody on board. I think that is a significant achievement in terms of resource sharing and actually really starting to understand the difference that this project could make. We all know it is about how we get that currency for other people to see what we see (MM7a).

This is a good example of how the MM had been motivated to seek out opportunities for engagement with corporate and political executives to positively promote the concept of partnership working. This was based on the benefits that this activity could deliver for the HIA project. It was positively identified as being a genuine accomplishment that was achieved by reaching desired objectives through the effective sharing of resources.

6.3.2 Endeavours to secure backing

MMs were keen to satisfy the expectations of corporate executives by adopting methods that would increase their performance on reduced budgets. The following example from an interview with a corporate executive outlines the expectations on what was expected provided. This emphasises the requirement to achieve cost savings through exercises to encourage more savings:

So when it comes to the budget setting exercise for example rather than those decisions being made in this room around this table we get them involved. And we say to them what would you suggest is needed to make the necessary savings having minimum impact on service-delivery and maximising the impact of the service to the customer” (CE4).

The following sections consider the purposeful activities of middle managers in continuing to encourage the backing from corporate and political executives.

Providing supporting information

A documentary analysis of The HIA Business Case demonstrated how MMs had produced a document for the purpose of providing information to sustain and maintain the support of corporate and political executives. This was achieved by advocating the requirement for sufficient funding to complete the project and maintain corporate and political support as potential risks that required monitoring and controlling. Observations at HIA Project Board meetings subsequently confirmed that the HIA Business Case was subject to strict regulation requiring sign-off by corporate and political executives before it could be functional as a working document. Field note 6: 30/11/12 detailed observation at HIA board meeting where MMs discussed protocols for obtaining sign-off for the business case within their respective local authority. Protocols for sign-off ranged from briefing the chief executive; gaining approval from the portfolio holder, political executive, and possible referral to scrutiny; seeking approval from housing subcommittee and approval or ultimately gaining sanction from full cabinet (comprising political executives: leader of the council and senior elected members). The success in obtaining approval was contingent on the MMs ability to successfully champion the HIA project.

MMs were motivated by previous examples where their ability to raise the awareness of the HIA's activities with corporate executives had led to successfully securing additional resources:

One of the things that always stays with me and what I put a great deal of store by was when I asked a [corporate executive] to put some of the money into the project and the [corporate executive] agreed to do that and the [corporate executive] sent a certain amount of money over ...based upon that discussion...so all of that stuff I think works really well. Because [the corporate executive] showed trust and that is something I have not forgotten that has really helped. When sometimes we have had really difficult relationships with [one local authority] I need to remember that that at the very top level of that organization the [corporate executive] made that trust and showed trust by putting some funding into the HIA project (MM1b).

This example demonstrates how the MM had been very determined to secure additional funding for the HIA project by referring it upwards. It was also evident that the MM had been successful through persistence and in building up a relationship with the corporate executive that was based on trust. The MM was also aware of the need to persevere with promoting the benefits of the HIA project in order to build up a solid relationship with the corporate executive.

Managing decision-making

MMs utilised their experience of previous encounters with political executives as a means of encouraging them to make an investment in the HIA project. This was

often a skilfully-manipulated activity based on exploiting previous experiences to maximise the likelihood of gaining the buy-in from powerful political executives:

One of the things I have learned about the environment here over the years is that [success is limited] if you ask people [political executives] to make too many decisions at once. Say you had got to make five decisions by gaining the support from five people in the room. If you ask them to make one decision then probably you will get a majority in favour of that one decision. If you ask them to make five decisions one of those people will have a problem with each of those five decisions. So you have got five decisions and five people who are uncomfortable with the five decisions. So nobody is in favour of all of it. That is then a problem and I have experienced that previously. You need to have a developed sense of people's nervousness around decisions and the dynamics within groups. Because people can think that the majority is fine but they always focus on what they are uncomfortable with (MM6b).

In this example the MM utilised previous experiences to ensure a better chance of gaining the support of corporate and political executives into HIA activities. The purposeful behaviour of the MM was demonstrated by their awareness that success in issue-selling would be more likely if political executives only had to decide on one issue at a time. This was favourable to making them feel that they had been forced to agree on a number of options.

Field note 113: 31/01/14 observed MMs as being proactive in deciding to approach corporate executives on budget allocations. This had arisen because of potential changes to the allocations of DFG funding that were being considered by central government.

Using pragmatism

Although MMs were determined to sustain the buy-in from corporate and political executives it was also apparent that this activity needed to be undertaken with pragmatism. This situation had been significantly affected by the current climate of the cuts to public services. However, MMs demonstrated how they persistently gauged adversities for the way they were likely to impact on future activities. This also had an impact on the way MMs set about championing the benefits of the HIA project in their attempts to gain further investment:

Reading between the lines I think there is hope amongst some of [the local authorities] in the HIA partnership at least that [a local authority] would give more money on the basis of certain successes. I think that is unlikely (a) because of the size of the savings required by [this Local Authority] and (b) because the other side of this argument is this is what we should be doing anyway. So why would you get paid more for not having done your job properly historically. That would be another side of this argument (MM5b).

In this example the MM was acutely aware that the ability for activities within the HIA project to achieve successes would not necessarily form the basis for any additional investment from corporate and political executives. It was evident that the requirement to meet cost-savings had weakened the ability for corporate and political executives to make such commitments. There was also the stronger argument that MMs would not receive increased funding purely on the basis of doing a good job, especially if this was what they should be doing anyway.

Field note 66: 06/06/13 highlights MMs contemplating the difficulties associated with getting top tier managers to buy into the concept of integrated service delivery. This was evidenced by difficulties associated with the differences in the hierarchies between local authorities. In this instance MMs were observed as being purposeful in their attempts to break down barriers associated with this situation.

6.3.3 Enlisting allies

The enlisting of corporate and political executives as allies to support HIA project demonstrated the proactive activities of MMs. The support of corporate and political executives was gained towards the HIA project by advocating its benefits, improving its visibility amongst stakeholders and developing a strategy for engagement. These activities were demonstrated through the following observations from a corporate executive. This example outlines the practical workings of the alliance between corporate executives and MMs:

I would say I expect a lot and I think that my expectations are fulfilled more often than not. There is a big element of strategy in what they [MMs] are doing....So I think [my role] is being the navigator and being willing to say "I didn't mean you to go there. I think we're heading for the rocks now" (CE3).

The following sections consider the endeavours of middle managers to enlist corporate and political executives as allies in support of the HIA projects activities.

Extending support

MMs were keen to ensure that the HIA project continued to gather support from corporate and political executives. This was assisted through their endeavours to advocate the benefits of the HIA project in order to sustain buy-in:

I think [a corporate executive] is on board ... and I think we are getting there now... We also need to make sure that we are able to converse in those kinds of terms with other [corporate executives] of [this Local Authority] because [the corporate executive] supports this but we don't get to see [that corporate executive] very often because [that corporate executive] has got the most impossible job in the world (MM1a).

The above example illustrates the determination of the MM to enlist powerful corporate executives as allies to support the HIA project activities. The eagerness to pursue a common language emphasises how the MM was keen to ensure that the work being delivered by the HIA project team was being valued. The MM was also very keen to ensure that existing relationships were built upon to enlist more support.

The resolve amongst MMs to sustain the buy-in from influential corporate executives was seen as an issue that needed to be addressed if it was perceived that these alliances could be waning:

I have actually met with their corporate executive myself to reinforce the benefits of the project. Because there were comments being made through my network that perhaps [the corporate

executive] was not on board. By sitting with [the corporate executive] and telling [the corporate executive] the benefits of what we are delivering and got that engagement again (MM4b).

In this example the MM had taken proactive steps to address a situation with an influential corporate executive when it became apparent through comments received elsewhere that there could potentially be a problem in sustaining their commitment. It was necessary to resolve this issue because of the uncertainties that might prove to be detrimental in the future.

Field note 179: 30/01/15 observed discussions between MMs about potential changes to portfolio holders (political executives) in the forthcoming local elections of May that year. Conversations centred around the need to prepare for this and being purposeful to ensure that the profile of the HIA project was brought to the attention of new political executives as soon as possible.

Improving visibility amongst stakeholders

Although there were successes in enlisting influential corporate and political executives to support HIA project activities doubts had been expressed on the ability of MMs to sustain interest in activities involving integrated-service-delivery:

Strategically I think we are lacking the profile with the influencers. So we are not visible with our elected members and maybe chief executives. I think the HIA board should take more responsibility for those discussions and involvement (MM4a).

In this example the MM expressed disquiet about the lack of steadfastness within the HIA project team to seek opportunities for influencing powerful that opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations that could promote the HIA initiative were being missed.

Field note 241: 26/06/15 observed MMs discussing the need to shore up political support through a series of awareness raising sessions. This would involve MMs emphasising the benefits and providing positive examples relating to how the HIA service was delivering improvements to home adaptations.

Developing a strategy for engagement

There was an acute awareness amongst MMs that they needed to identify the key people, who could pledge their support to the HIA initiative:

I suppose it is that influencing and there should be a stakeholder analysis to define who you should put your efforts into and who are the key people to involve (MM4a).

This illustration demonstrates how the MM was aware of the need to identify stakeholders as part of the development of an engagement strategy. This activity would involve a commitment to perform more effectively in the future in order to prevent this situation from occurring again.

The following provides a good example of the way MMs should be operating in order to be effective in enlisting corporate and political executives as allies to support the HIA initiative:

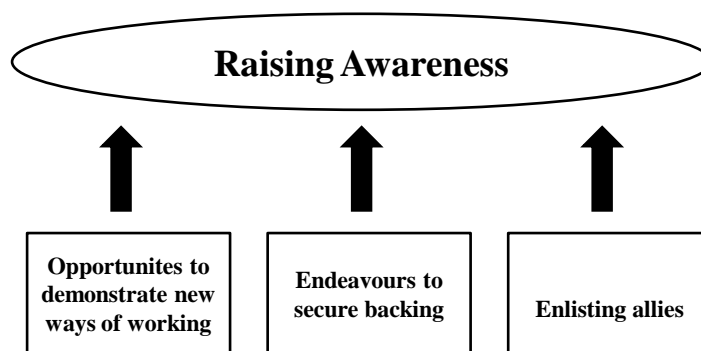
A [MM colleague] has been very active and supportive in giving a clear strategic guide I think [this MM] thinks very strategically and has a very strategic level around engagement. This [MM] has provided the expert advice around engaging (MM4b).

This reason why the MM in question was successful in engagement was attributable to adopting a strategic approach when engaging with corporate and political executives.

Field note 195: 27/03/15 observed MMs discussing a draft project plan for the home improvement agency in terms of providing clarity for members and selling the advantages of the service. This was deemed necessary to allay any concerns from political executives.

Figure 2 provides an overview of how MMs engaged with political and corporate executives upwardly by raising awareness to their activities. This draws upon the second order and third order coding.

Figure 2: Activities to raise awareness



6.4 Interpreting

MMs were observed to enact the interpretation of their activities to corporate and political executives. This was achieved through exploiting informal opportunities to provide clarification on HIA project activities by utilizing opportune moments for engagement and maintaining effective relationships. The promotion of good news stories provided MMs with the opportunity to showcase achievements. Activities included clarifying how HIA project activities fitted in within the strategic corporate

priorities. This was achieved by apprising corporate and political executives on the strategic direction of HIA activities. These activities are summarised in table 7.

Table 7: Activities associated with interpreting

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
Field note 66: 06/06/13 observes MMs engaged in proactive efforts in discussing attempts to push issues in front of corporate and political executives. This is defined as a process requiring coercion in order to gain acceptance for the concepts of partnership working and integrated service delivery.	Providing clarification	Exploiting informal opportunities	Interpreting
There is a common interest in our pilot and I can see that there are some allies there. In terms of the way we are thinking. So strategically that is my play I just keep the pressure on and gather allies so that we can deliver the service (MM6b).	Utilising opportune moments		
Field note 210: 27/03/ 15 observes MMs discussing how to explain a strategic outline case for delivering home adaptations to political executives. This activity involved proactive interactions that built upon the relationship of trust that had been built up by MMs with political executives.	Maintaining effective relationships		
I have kept on pushing and saying this is what we are doing this is what we are delivering and bringing good news stories to [my corporate executive] who is now prepared to give time to it, which is very valuable because [my corporate executive] fully believes in what we are doing. (MM4b).	Focusing on achievements	Developing good news stories	
Promoting the positives as well as the less positive...We could do that a number of ways. Corporate Management Team have Monday morning meetings. You could book a slot to go to that (MM10b).	Opportunities to showcase achievements		
There is a careful balance to make sure that it continues with a positive reputation but we don't overstate it or over play it because that could actually backfire. (MM5b).	Managing awareness raising		
Field note 114: 28/03/14 observes MMs discussing the HIA project from the perspective of what needed to remain in scope, what activities should be undertaken in the future and what should be categorised as falling out of scope. This provides further confirmation on the intention of MMs to formalise their working practices to provide more clarity on their activities.	Formalising working practices	Activities within strategic priorities	
I have obviously made sure that people are kept up to-date on those things. I work with my portfolio holder very closely. I have a meeting with [my political executive] every fortnight and I make sure that she understands the whole project. (MM1b)	Apprising on strategic direction		
You have got to be able to put your message across and explain the reason why things have got to be the case. You have got to back that up with evidence, whether everyone is in that position to do that I don't know. You have to make evidence based decisions where possible (MM2b).	Securing partnership working		

6.4.1 Exploiting informal opportunities

Exploiting informal opportunities to provide clarification of HIA project activities was achieved by utilizing all moments for engagement which served to maintain effective relationships. An example of how this activity worked in practice was illustrated by the following corporate executive:

[My MM] plays an absolutely key role in terms of management particularly as we have moved to a much slimmer management structure...I'm sure [my MM] would have been in touch if there were any major issues with that and certainly when I have talked it through with [my MM] things are going pretty well (CE2).

The following section considers how MMs have exploited informal opportunities to sell issues related to the HIA project.

Providing clarification

MMs ensured that the HIA project continued to be supported by corporate executives through exploiting regular briefings, which provided them with the opportunity to provide clarification on the HIA project activities:

I think for me now it is having the support of [my corporate executive] giving that support as well. So I think what has been difficult for me personally is that I have had a number of changes in my [corporate executive] over a period of time. And so sometimes it feels like going back to the start to influence and negotiate and to get that commitment but then once I've got it this is really important (MM4a).

This example highlights the commitment that the MM put into developing a solid relationship with a corporate executive. This was driven by the fact that once this association had been forged it was a very effective way to provide clarification on HIA project activities. It was achieved by taking advantage of situations that enabled the MM to synthesise information for corporate executives as part of their issue-selling strategy. The ability to capitalise on informal opportunities for raising awareness with corporate executives was, therefore, integral to the ability for MMs to maintain their backing. This example also demonstrates the dedication that MMs put into the development of solid relationships with corporate executives as a means of enabling them to continue with activities that had been developed within their professional service area.

Field note 67: 06/06/13 observed MMs engaged in proactive efforts by discussing attempts to push issues in front of corporate and political executives. This is defined as a process requiring proactive persuasion to gain acceptance on the concepts of partnership working and integrated service delivery.

Utilizing opportune moments

MMs ensured that they took advantage of opportune moments to sustain the support of corporate and political executives. This was a purposeful activity that preserved their support and it was driven by the recognition that this was a key activity that required constant attention:

I just have to keep pushing that. I think I can influence by the behind-the-scenes by getting people on board. I think [corporate and political executives from two local authorities] are now beginning to get a close working relationship around this type of work. There is a common interest in our pilot and I can see that there are some allies there. In terms of the way we are thinking. So strategically that is my play I just keep the pressure on and gather allies so that we can deliver the service (MM6b).

This example provides an insight into the intricacies enacted by the MM in order to secure and maintain buy-in to the HIA project. The activity was motivated by an awareness that the HIA project activities would be bolstered by the backing of as many corporate and political executives as possible. It would enable the MM to promote the achievements that had been accomplished by activities within the HIA project in order to sustain the endorsement of corporate and political executives.

Field note 123: 28/03/14 provides confirmation of close working relationships between MMs and political executives. MMs were conscious of the fact that current provisions for delivering the HIA project would only remain viable if they could provide convincing arguments that outsourcing would be more costly option. This required MMs to find opportune moments with political executives to demonstrate financial effectiveness through examples that could demonstrate value for money.

MMs demonstrated resolve in ensuring that they maintained their relationships with corporate executives as a means of utilizing opportune moments to discuss issues relating to the HIA project. This was achieved through brief informal meetings that

were convened to check how adequately the activities of the HIA project were contributing to corporate strategic objectives:

I meet my corporate executive on a monthly basis soon after the meeting. It gives [my corporate executive] the opportunity to challenge from outside as well as to understand where we are. What I try and do is provide a good oversight of things like any project problems, and talk about cultural issues. Occasionally what I will try to do...in broad terms if there is a particular problem that needs unblocking or something like that I will talk to one of our [corporate executives] and see if they can raise that at countywide meetings So we have got the methods in place there are mechanisms there (MM1b).

This example demonstrates how the MM used the opportunity to provide a de-brief of HIA project board meetings via a meeting with a corporate executive to provide clarification on current activities. This activity was driven by a desire by the MM to preserve the interest of the corporate executives and this was achieved by raising awareness of specific aspects taking place within the project and possibly asking for assistance on specific issues.

While MMs were enthusiastic in their desire to make good use of occasions where they could engage with corporate and political executives informally, it was evident these opportunities were also useful in solving issues requiring intervention at a higher corporate level:

We are all at a significantly high level in our own organization to make decisions and to make things happen we do not really need the top tier executives to make that happen for us. So a lot of the

time it is making sure that we interact with them as needs be. I mean if I can conceive of the situation where we might get involved at the highest level through the district and county mechanisms with the chief executives would be if somebody was deciding to drop out. But we have managed to keep the HIA coalition together, partnership is probably a better word, through our own efforts so it is not generally needed (MM1b).

This highlights that MMs were committed to developing relationships with corporate executives on the basis that they were a resource to be drawn upon circumstances where an intervention at the top-level was required such as if a local authority was contemplating leaving the partnership. In these circumstances the MM would exploit the relationship that they had developed with their corporate executive to gain agreement to discuss the possible departure with the corporate executive of the local authority in question on behalf of the MM.

Maintaining effective relationships

In order for MMs to preserve a positive association with their political executives it was essential that this relationship was very carefully managed:

A lot of this work comes down to trust I have said this before it comes down to relationships. If we all feel that we have been turned over in some way we're not going to do it again are we? Or at least our members will tell us that we are not doing it again. It is very important how we deal with this (MM1b).

This provides an illustration of the resolution of the MM to build up a dedicated alliance with their political executives, including influential elected members with

responsibility for the service-area. This established relationship could then be utilised to support their arguments. It included matters such as discussing the fair allocation of funding in committee meetings that included external health agencies. This was necessary because the political executives had the power and influence to support the MM in key discussions such as these. As these conversations often affected the future direction of the HIA project, the MM played a pivotal role in ensuring that this relationship was managed effectively.

Field note 210: 27/03/ 15 observed MMs discussing how to explain a strategic outline case for delivering home adaptations to political executives. This activity demonstrates the proactive interactions of MMs in building upon the relationship of trust that had been built up with political executives.

6.4.2 Developing good news stories

MMs focused on the HIA projects achievements to showcase achievements and manage activities within their extensive work portfolio. These activities were enhanced through the promotion of good news stories. The determination of MMs to extol the virtues of the HIA project was testified by a corporate executive. The following example demonstrates how the resolution of the MM to update their corporate executive on the virtues of the HIA project had led to a positive endorsement of their achievements. This was evidenced by the commendation by the corporate executive on their effectiveness in raising awareness on the complexity of tasks associated with integrating services across partner local authorities. This

provides an illustration of useful feedback from the corporate executive highlighting the MM as being particularly successful in exploiting windows of opportunity to champion the HIA project:

I have said to [my MM] so I'm not just idly flattering. I think the mark of their success has been getting the partners to work at this and to buy-into it because that's not easy. [my MM] has not done a lot of the normative stuff, has not done a lot of changes to the system but [my MM] has been the person saying "this is not good enough we can't keep doing this. It is a win-win situation we will improve the service for the customer but we will also save a lot of time and effort in everything else and in what we are doing". So to me it is just another example of "don't tell me why you can't do it" and a positive example of even with the most complicated of approaches involving a number of partners you can still make some really good progress (CE3).

The following sections explore the purposeful activities of MMs and their interest in promoting good news stories.

Focusing on achievements

MMs sustained the interest of corporate executives by exploiting occasions where they could promote good news stories. This activity ensured sustaining the awareness of corporate and political executives towards the HIA projects activities:

I have kept on pushing and saying this is what we are doing this is what we are delivering and bringing good news stories to [my corporate executive] who is now prepared to give time to it, which is very valuable because [my corporate executive] fully believes in what we are doing. (MM4b).

The MM in this example was determined to promote the positive activities that were being undertaken within the HIA project. Such activities were effective in sustaining the commitment of the corporate executive. This had the desired result of sustaining agreement to devote more attention to HIA project activities.

Field note 142: 25/07/14 observed the proactive attempts of MMs to produce a matrix identifying the core components of the service, opportunities that could enhance the service and its benefits to customers and organizations. This provides an example of the endeavours of MMs to develop a positive message for dissemination to corporate and political executives. This represented an opportunity for MMs to promote the achievements of HIA project activities.

Opportunities to showcase achievements

MMs were committed to seek out appropriate occasions that would sustain the support of corporate executives towards HIA project activities:

I suppose what we could be doing, I'm kind of thinking about engaging them in a event ... I suppose what we should be aiming for is that we keep [our corporate and political executives] engaged about the good news as well so that they are aware of our project and it is in the back of their minds. We should be doing that as well. Promoting the positives as well as the less positive... We could do that a number of ways. Corporate Management Team

have Monday morning meetings. You could book a slot to go to that (MM10b).

The above example provides a useful insight into how the MM was keen to take advantage of the internal engagement process in order to sustain the attention of corporate executives. The MM was driven by an awareness of the potential impact that such an event would make in providing the opportunity to exploit positive stories. It also had the potential to engender engagement and sustain the buy-in from corporate executives.

MMs were committed to the exploitation of channels of communication that could be utilised to positively raise the awareness of the HIA project through good news stories. However, there was also an inherent awareness that securing occasions that were suitable for sustaining buy-in were contingent on the timing as to when this engagement should take place:

In terms of more locally I think we are little bit divorced from what is going on. In terms of the actual delivery and it is a little early for good news stories. Obviously we are keen to present a favourable impression of the project and [another MM] is probably sick of me suggesting how things are going in terms of good news stories. I think we are just on the cusp of having some of those I was anticipating involving them a little earlier in the pilot (MM6b).

It was evident from this example the MM was motivated by the need to preserve a positive reputation with corporate and political executives. This had led to a decision by the MM to deliberately hold-back on reporting on the progress of the

HIA project until there were sufficient good new stories to positively demonstrate its achievements.

Field note: 13: 22/02/13 observed MMs discussing their representation at a forthcoming event aimed at showcasing the activities of the HIA project. MMs extended discussions on how they would present these activities positively to corporate executives. The key point of emphasis was effective partnership working culminating in the integrated delivery of the HIA project.

Managing Awareness-raising within the work portfolio

While MMs were purposeful in demonstrating the added value that the HIA project was delivering they were also aware that this needed to be carefully managed within the current workload. This involved carefully balancing the time that could be devoted to promoting the achievements of the HIA project within the constraints of other activities:

I think this is a reality of how difficult it is to manage this within the interplay of many other things. It does not stand-alone and there are many other things going on. My judgement call is there are other things more important than this that I will spend more time on. I will spend just enough time on this to make sure it keeps going in the general direction with which we are all happy and that it does not cost any more. To ensure it gives overall benefits that I am clear and satisfied about ... regardless of anything else I have looked at the quarterly report and assessed its benefits to social care. I am happy with the amount of investment that I am putting

in ... we are getting this much out and it looks about like this (MM 5b).

The above example demonstrates how the MM carefully balanced the promotion of HIA achievements within other priority areas within their portfolio of work. This was also evidenced by a commitment to spend just the right amount of time to the promotion of HIA activities to ensure that it continued to be supported by corporate and political executives.

MMs motivation to champion HIA activities was also carefully managed to ensure that it continued to receive the backing on corporate and political executives:

There is a careful balance to make sure that it continues with a positive reputation but we don't overstate it or over play it because that could actually backfire. (MM5b).

This example illustrates the intuitive awareness that MMs had developed in ensuring HIA activities received continued backing from corporate and political executives. Opportunities to champion its achievements were notably deliberately constrained at times to ensure that it maintained a favourable impression amongst corporate and political executives.

Field note 121: 28/03/14 observed MMs discussing the need to demonstrate the contribution that the HIA project team could make to the strategic priorities of

corporate executives. Concerns were expressed that progress could be hampered owing to a lack of progress on scoping the project. This culminated in the decision to conduct a re-scoping exercise.

The determination of MMs to promote the added value that the HIA project could deliver was maintained by a quarterly-reporting process. This was in the form of a standard document that was produced for and discussed at HIA Project Board meetings. It measured customer outcomes and improvements and system changes that had been achieved over time.

The fact that the HIA project had maintained the integrated partnership arrangement with a number of local authorities was a good news story that MMs wanted to exploit. This was perceived as an issue that could be sold as part of their commitment to sustaining the support of corporate and political executives:

Now we've kept the key players throughout that that's been one of the things that's made this possible has been that constancy of people involved through the same journey. What they have then done is try to talk to their [corporate and political executives] about it (MM1a).

This example supports the purposeful activities of MMs in defining the HIA project as a journey that could be championed as a good news story to corporate and political executives on that basis.

There was sufficient evidence to support positive stories in selling issues based on the achievements of the HIA project. However, there was nonetheless an awareness that more work needed to be done:

I don't think we are very good at communicating or demonstrating and I suppose that aspect of work is how can we demonstrate the effectiveness of what we are delivering (MM4a).

This example demonstrates how there were differences in attitudes towards being resolute about promoting the project to corporate and political executives. It was evident that there was an awareness by the MM that not everyone was tasked with the same determination to champion the achievements of the HIA to corporate and political executives.

The MMs who had been persistent in proactively championing the achievements of the HIA project were able to describe this as a complex activity:

It is really interesting how we can influence through evidence, we can influence through what we do on the ground and who we talk to but also personalities come into play don't they (MM8b).

This example demonstrates how MMs were aware of the need to be steadfast in engaging with corporate and political executives. This included developing an awareness of the personalities of the corporate and political executives to define what could be considered to be a good news story.

6.4.3 Activities within strategic priorities

MMs were actively involved in clarifying HIA project activities within the strategic corporate priorities. This enabled working practices to become more formalised and to apprise corporate and political executives on the strategic direction of HIA activities through partnership-working. This activity had been highlighted by a corporate executive as being a crucial part of the MMs role:

At the end of the day when they are dealing with a new system and they know that they have been instrumental in changing that system then their motivation levels increase and tremendously increase.
(CE4).

The following sections consider the activities of middle managers in providing justifications of their activities in contributing to corporate objectives.

Formalizing working practices

MMs were aware that they would need to develop their HIA project activities into a formalised service that could eventually operate legitimately in favour of its current project status:

At the minute the politicians and the [corporate and political executives] are allowing us to do it. I think that in itself this is radical because what we are being allowed to do is what works for

the customer. But the time will come when we will have to say to say “right ok how are we going to do this now? How are we going formalise this? What is our governance?” (MM8a).

This example demonstrates that while MMs were aware that they had been allowed to develop the HIA project. However, these activities were being undertaken with the awareness that eventually would need to adopt a formal arrangement towards corporate and political executives in formalising these arrangements. While MMs had skilfully negotiated the current project status arrangements on the basis that it was able to deliver favourable outcomes there was also an awareness that the HIA project team would eventually demonstrate its worth. This would include providing evidence that a continuous evaluation exercise had been undertaken on the basis of how it would eventually operate as an established service.

Field note 114: 28/03/14 observed MMs discussing the HIA project from the perspective of what needed to remain in scope, what activities should be undertaken in the future and what should be categorised as falling out of scope. This provided further confirmation on the intention of MMs to formalise their working practices to clarify their activities.

Apprising on the strategic direction

The commitment to apprise political executives involved a fine-tuned approach that was undertaken on the basis of maintaining their buy-in to the HIA project. This activity was effectively achieved through regular one-to-one meetings:

I have obviously made sure that people are kept up-to-date on those things. I work with my portfolio holder very closely. I have a meeting with [my political executive] every fortnight and I make sure that she understands the whole project. As we have been going through this exercise it is important that the evolving narrative is understood and that [my political executives] is able to give me a strategic steer (MM1b).

This example highlights how regular meetings held between the MM and political executives served to promote the HIA activities by building up a rich picture of the key activities that the MM is involved with. The fact that meetings took place each fortnight indicates the dedication of the MM in ensuring the portfolio holder [political executive] was able to gain a detailed insight into project-activities, which helped maintain the viability of its activities. It was also interesting to note that the MM could utilise this regular contact to influence the general direction of project activities and sustain its viability by continuously raising awareness of its activities.

The commitment of MMs to promote the HIA to corporate and political executives had the benefit of enabling large issues to be addressed where there was a need for this support:

If we do have bigger problems then there is a route [via corporate and political executives] to getting them solved rather than just

hiding it from them. We work with them and I think that that is a major benefit (MM2a).

This illustrates how the determination to forge an effective relationship with corporate and political executives had developed into an open and transparent exchange of information where corporate and political executives could provide assistance when this was needed.

Field note 126: 28/03/14 observed MMs discussing the strategic direction of the HIA project in the light of financial challenges facing local authorities. These discussions emphasised the necessity for project achievements to focus on how these could contribute to a reduction in costs for local authorities. It was decided that current messages had to be a lot more sharper and clearer.

Securing partnership working

Efforts to develop a close relationship with political executives included the elected member who was the portfolio holder for the professional service area. This was a very effective way to maintain the continued viability of the HIA project:

The relationship with our portfolio holder[political executive] is important in being able to have those discussions about the opportunities threats and benefits to the public. I think that relationship is good here and you are able to do that. I do not know whether it is different anywhere else. You need that working relationship with your portfolio holder so those messages can be

got across. And then the portfolio holder will be able to influence the political side and say whether or not it is a good idea to go ahead or not. To me I think a lot of it does condense relationships if you are at loggerheads with someone it is not necessarily a good position to be in. Although there are some lines that you would not want to cross I think relationships are key. But you have got to be able to put your message across and explain the reason why things have got to be the case. You have got to back that up with evidence, whether everyone is in that position to do that I don't know. You have to make evidence based decisions where possible (MM2b).

This example illustrates how the future strategic direction of the HIA project was promoted in order to keep its profile sustained with political executives. By advocating the effectiveness of the HIA project in a carefully-managed way conflict was avoided and the necessary support was available from political executives to back up key decisions on project activities.

MMs were committed to raising the profile of HIA activities by exploiting opportunities to keep their political executives regularly updated on the performance of the HIA project. This was viewed as an opportunity to champion its achievements:

Regular updates for my [corporate executive] and the portfolio holder [political executive]. Warts and all because I have discussed this with my [corporate executive] and we need to be measured in what we tell the portfolio holder [political executive]. My [corporate executive] is quite happy that the portfolio holder [political executive] is kept on board (MM6b).

The reporting process was carefully managed through an interplay between the open and up front discussion with the corporate executive and then agreeing a strategy on

how to present this information to the political executive holding the portfolio for the service area.

MMs were very determined to ensure that the HIA partnership operated cohesively in order to sustain common objectives with corporate and political executives. This maintained support where it was felt that there was a necessary requirement for them to intervene in this process:

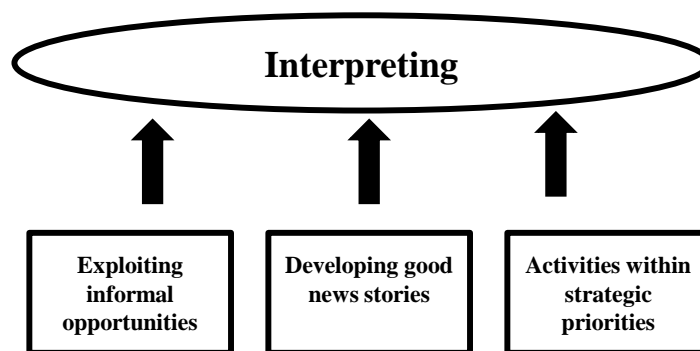
Where we have expended energy in terms of trying to make sure that the coalition stays together if you like it is difficult to overstate that that it needs constant work. So there are [six local authorities]. Although we have worked enormously well throughout this long period obviously progress has been necessarily slow as we have learned what to do and we have kept that coalition together. Where we expend energy [with corporate and political executives] it tends to be in trying to make sure that we continue to work collectively. So an example might be with [a local authority] where if we have struggled to get them to engage at the highest level... And you know life happens I have got an awful lot of work to do (MM1b).

This example demonstrates the amount of commitment and effort that went on behind-the-scenes to keep the HIA partnership aligned to the strategic objectives of each individual local authority. An integral part of this process was the purposeful efforts by MMs to ensure that there was sufficient support from the corporate and political executives to intervene when there was a requirement for them to influence the activities of corporate and political executives across the local authorities.

Field note 144: 25/07/14 observed MMs discussing the future direction of partnership working and which local authority should be the host for this consortia. All were in agreement that a major challenge and objective was to secure the support of corporate and political executives towards a formal agreement.

Figure 3 provides an overview of how MMs engaged with political and corporate executives upwardly by interpreting their activities. This draws upon the second order and third order coding.

Figure 3: Activities contributing to interpreting



6.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to explore how MMs utilized the institutional work of alerting, interpreting and proving as a means of championing strategic alternatives to

corporate and political executives in order to align HIA project activities to secure its acceptance and sustain its long-term viability.

The key focus was on the purposeful activities of MMs engaged in selling issues of the HIA project as an alternative towards corporate and political executives. An exploration was undertaken into the way MMs developed a strategy for engaging with corporate and political executives. Proving focused on the updating of progress through scrutiny mechanisms, demonstrating benefits at regularly established meetings and demonstrating visibility of progress through formalised reporting procedures. Raising awareness explored how MMs contemplated actions to alert corporate and political executives to their activities through extolling the benefits of new ways of working, encouraging investment and enlisting corporate and political executives as allies to support HIA project activities. This paved the way for developing institutional work associated with interpreting through the exploitation of informal opportunities for engagement, promoting good news stories and clarifying the HIA project activities within the context of strategic corporate priorities. The activities of proving, Awareness-raising and interpreting and all contributed to the aligning of the HIA as an activity within the six local authorities that had decided to deliver of home improvement services through a collective partnership.

Chapter 7 - Selling Issues Outwards

7.1 Introduction

This data analysis chapter focuses on the outwards activities of middle managers (MMs) towards executives in external organizations. Initial observations found MMs to be contemplating the antecedents to institutional work when considering how they could alert external executives of individual agencies to the concept of the HIA project. However, focusing on the data identified MMs as being more purposeful when enacting institutional work in circumstances that enabled them to form alliances with powerful internal executives. This association paved the way for opportunities enabling MMs to commence forging strategic alliances with external executives. This involved MMs persisting in interventions that would lead to securing representation at external committee meetings, thereby providing a more advantageous position for selling issues related to the HIA project.

MMs were observed to be engaged in antecedents of institutional work when considering how they intended to sell issues to external executives from health agencies in the macro-environment. Antecedents were identified as contemplating how to resolve cultural differences between the major providers of health-related activities, how to demonstrate the viability of the activities with the HIA project and deciding on the development of a communication strategy.

Owing to the fact that MMs were only at the preliminary stages of contemplating how to raise awareness their ability to champion the HIA project, it was judged by external executives to be not that important. Concerns were raised by external executives on its clarity of purpose leading to perceived ambiguities relating to its benefits for other health service providers. There was also a perception that the activities of individual agencies such as the work of the HIA project would be improved by sharing common areas of concern across the board. The visibility of the activities and achievements of the HIA project was, at best, perceived to be limited by other agencies.

Having established that MMs were involved at the precursory stage of activities in intending to make contact with external executives of individual agencies this analysis sought to identify areas where MMs could be identified as engaging in institutional work. Evidence of such purposeful behaviour was identified in circumstances where MMs had dealings with existing internal alliances. This was particularly prevalent in the endeavours by MMs to secure representation at external committee meetings. The significance of this activity relates to the presence of influential external executives in the macro environment at these meetings. When membership to the external committee meetings had been confirmed MMs showed determination to use these as a platform for promoting the benefits of the HIA project.

This analysis, therefore, confirms MMs as undertaking precursory institutional work on initiatives that involved making direct contact with external executives of health

agencies. Instead the preferred means of issue-selling involved utilising influential internal contacts. These corporate and political executives were powerful allies who helped manipulate the leveraging of MMs into formalised structures. These external committee meetings had been established by very powerful external executives in health- related agencies to discuss issues related to pooled funding. They were also attended by political and corporate executives from local authorities. Securing representation at these meetings was identified as the preferred option by MMs to commence in activities that might gain buy-in from external agencies.

7.2 Strategic Intentions

MMs were initially observed to be contemplating how they could engage with external executives in health agencies on strategic issues related to the activities of the HIA project. The main focus of this activity was to explore how they could resolve cultural differences between the major providers of public-sector health services. MMs were particularly interested in how they could develop a common discourse that would address misunderstandings between agencies. These were linked to a desire to gain a greater understanding of the costs and developing a common framework to enable a greater understanding between health service providers in the macro-environment.

MMs were keen to provide evidence on how the HIA project would prevent the need for costlier activities. It was anticipated that this would gain more credibility

through practices that could raise the profile of its activities. MMs also contemplated the development of a communication strategy to raise awareness of the HIA project activities within the macro-health arena. It was anticipated that success could be achieved by making the service fit for purpose, planning when the appropriate time for taking action and seeking effective methods to promote HIA project activities.

The strategic intentions of MMs in endeavouring to bring the HIA project to the attention of external executives in healthcare organisations are summarised in table 8.

Table 8: Strategic intentions

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
For me it is trying to understand from [a health agency's] perspective what is their culture because I think that part of it is that the culture of local authorities will be different to that of [a health agency] ...I'm not sure we will entirely understand their dialect if you like until we can get somebody fully engaged at the right level from [the health agency]. (MM7a)	Resolving cultural differences	Developing an understanding of healthcare provision	Strategic intentions
What we have got to do is we have got to get onto the pinch points that can make a difference to them like the discharge stuff. We have got to be able to...put it in a single currency... to enable us to talk their language and actually say "you know guys".(MM1a)	Devising a common discourse		
And if we can make a solid case for saying if it costs it doesn't cost that I'll round it up £5,000 for a hip replacement. "But actually if you spend [external executive] £1,000 with us. [External executive] you have saved £4,000 and we have stopped that person going into hospital. What that person wanted was not to have been injured in the first place and to remain independent at home. And for a cost of £1000 that stopped that happening and that's saved you £4000 [external executive] each time we do that". (MM7a)	Understanding costs within a common framework		
I think it is about results isn't it? It is about evidence again isn't it? If we can prove that we are preventing people from going into hospital or when they come out of hospital we have stopped them from staying in for as long. If we can prove that we are in a much better place in being able to say "you should really be investing in the service because it is going to save you elsewhere".(MM8b)	Providing evidence	Demonstrating the viability of activities	
How do we talk to them in a language that makes sense to them? How do we make ourselves important to them? We can't expect them to want us to be important they don't know that we can provide. They don't really think too much about what our role is.(MM1a)	Developing a profile of activities		

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
Field note 110: 31/01/14 observes MMs discussing possibilities for branding HIA project activities in order to make the service more accessible to healthcare agencies and funding streams within these. The general consensus established that the HIA project needed to be clearer on what it could provide that gave it a differential advantage over other activities involved in preventative initiatives.	Formalising working practices	Devising a communication strategy	Strategic intentions
Beyond that we do not know so it does make it quite difficult. Whether you proceed as normal and market the HIA project stating this is where we are. That in itself might save us because we are letting everyone know that we are here and this is what we are doing. Or is it a case that you might be marketing something that is potentially not going to be there because of the swathing cuts that the [health agency] are going to be making (MM8b).	Apprising on strategic direction		
What I think we have then got is a good opportunity to align with some ... [health agency] initiatives like keeping warm, healthy eating and falls risk assessment. There are just so many opportunities (MM4b).	Seeking effective methods		

7.2.1 Developing an understanding of health provision

Resolving cultural differences

MMs were keen to explore ways in which cultural differences amongst health agencies in the macro-environment could be addressed. Achieving a closer alliance would enable alignment of the activities of the HIA project towards those of health agencies in the macro-environment. It was perceived that a key way to break down the barriers preventing the effective conversations taking place was to build up relationships with influential external executives:

For me it is trying to understand from [a health agency's] perspective what is their culture because I think that part of it is that the culture of local authorities will be different to that of [a health agency] ...I'm not sure we will entirely understand their dialect if you like until we can get somebody fully engaged at the right level from [the health agency]. It is trying to work out how we do that and get some quick wins that could act as a carrot to get someone interested in our activities (MM7a).

In this example the MM had defined the objective of teaming up with an influential external executive as a means of gaining a greater understanding of how the HIA project's activities could be more closely aligned to the values that would be culturally acceptable within other health agencies. It was anticipated by MMs that this activity could contribute other evidence that would strengthen the viability of the HIA's activities.

Field note 116: observes MMs discussing funding streams from healthcare agencies and how the HIA project could tap into this. Discussions centered on the need to concentrate on key areas such as promoting the benefits to elderly, vulnerable and disabled people. This provides an example of how MMs were keen to exploit areas of activity that accorded with healthcare agencies.

Devising a common discourse

A common conception amongst MM's was that the benefits of HIA project activities could be demonstrated through their efforts to develop a discourse that linked similarities between health agencies. This was often defined by MMs as the need to develop a common currency. Field note 78: 30/08/13 detailed an observation at a HIA project board meeting where MMs discussed the benefits of an imminent meeting with an external executive from a health agency as an opportunity to demonstrate how the HIA project could deliver health and well being interventions and provide evidence of positive activities. One MM recommended providing statistical evidence and performance reports at this meeting in order to substantiate this evidence. This example demonstrates how MMs were particularly keen to

exploit the concept of developing a common discourse to engage more effectively with influential external executives.

A key factor governing the concept of a common discourse was to highlight cost savings that could be achieved through preventative activities. This created a common perception amongst MMs that if proof of cost savings could be effectively demonstrated this would eventually lead to the securing of additional investment from external health providers:

What we have got to do is we have got to get onto the pinch points that can make a difference to them like the discharge stuff. We have got to be able to...put it in a single currency... to enable us to talk their language and actually say "you know guys". They are talking about the number of bed spaces they have for that day...if we could convert the activities of the HIA project into savings on bed spaces per day. Or maybe we could have a currency converter. We could talk to the [health agency] about bed spaces per day and we could talk to the county council about adult social care budgets. I don't care if we need to get fluent in several currencies but the best thing would be to get to a single currency that we could all understand (MM1a).

This example illustrates how the MM was linking into the activities of the HIA project to priorities within the macro-health arena. It was based on the belief that MMs in the project team could work strategically to raise awareness of the preventative activities being delivered by the project. This was achievable by identifying what would help health agencies to resolve longstanding issues and how the HIA project could enable them to achieve a successful outcome.

Understanding costs within a common framework

The amount of savings that could be derived from HIA activities for health agencies was conceptualised by MMs as an issue for greater consideration:

And if we can make a solid case for saying if it costs it doesn't cost that I'll round it up £5,000 for a hip replacement. "But actually if you spend [external executive] £1,000 with us. [External executive] you have saved £4,000 and we have stopped that person going into hospital. What that person wanted was not to have been injured in the first place and to remain independent at home. And for a cost of £1000 that stopped that happening and that's saved you £4000 [external executive] each time we do that". And it is validating that I think because without some sort of robust evidence behind it this will continue and I think it is hard to engage them we know that we know that it is going to be very hard and we need to find a way to make it happen really (MM7a).

The above example demonstrates how the MM had utilized an argument to provide reasons on why external executives in health-service providers should make a contribution. This was predicated on the belief that the interventions being delivered through the activities within the HIA project might prevent the need for more costly health services later on. It was also underpinned by evidence that fully supported the HIAs contributions. The MM, therefore, used arguments for additional investment that merited this.

Field note 148: 25/04/14 observed MMs discussing options for accessing various funding streams within the wider healthcare arena. This involved identifying which aspects had particular relevance to the activities of the HIA project team. This

formed part of a consultation exercise that provided MMs with a greater understanding of priorities for funding streams.

7.2.2 Demonstrating the viability of activities

Providing evidence of how service provides positive outcomes

MMs had developed an argument that could encourage investment in the HIA project based upon the benefits of the integrated partnership. This assessed the savings likely to be achieved through the preventative measures delivered by the HIA project. This also sought to address the complexities involved in convincing health agencies in the macro environment. This emphasised the benefits based on the fact that the HIA project could effectively contribute to the preventative agenda within the public-sector:

I think it is about results isn't it? It is about evidence again isn't it? If we can prove that we are preventing people from going into hospital or when they come out of hospital we have stopped them from staying in for as long. If we can prove that we are in a much better place in being able to say "you should really be investing in the service because it is going to save you elsewhere". But evidencing that is always difficult... it is very difficult to use something as evidence on the basis that you are just preventing them from falling. That is really hard to prove I mean you can say "if they do fall it costs this much in hospital costs compare to the price of a stair lift, which costs this". But how can you defend the question "what if they don't fall?" (MM8b).

In this example the MM had realized that providing services that were aligned to the preventative agenda within the health arena contributed to the dilemma of proving that up-front savings could be achieved. The fact that the savings were at least speculative meant that the strategic intentions of MMs to argue for investment into the HIA project would need to accommodate these additional complexities.

Field note 57: 06/06/13 observed MMs discussing the benefits of being invited by a regional clinical commissioning group to undertake a presentation that explained how the activities of the HIA project team could contribute to healthcare activities. This was conceived as a real opportunity to lay the foundations for a greater interaction with influential members of the healthcare community.

Developing a profile of activities

In spite of the difficulties associated with communicating the positive benefits of the HIA project to external agencies, MMs were nonetheless determined to address these issues in order to raise awareness of its benefits amongst potential external partners within the macro-environment:

*How do we talk to them in a language that makes sense to them?
How do we make ourselves important to them? We can't expect
them to want us to be important they don't know that we can
provide. They don't really think too much about what our role is.
We are more acutely aware of that so it is our role as far as I can*

see to create something to create the language that we can talk to them to get them on board. It is our job because they are not going to do it...So that is our job to sell what we are doing and to do that we need a common currency (MM1a).

The above example demonstrates how the MM had recognised the benefits of developing a common language to make it easier for external executives to become aware of what the HIA project activities could deliver. This, in turn, led the MM to realise that the onus to create a collective language was contingent on the activities of the HIA project team and it was their job to promote this objective.

Field note 12: 22/02/13 observed MMs discussing news that the HIA project had been shortlisted for a competition that sought examples of innovative activities. The case study submitted was perceived as having benefits in terms of raising awareness of HIA project activities within the wider healthcare community.

7.2.3 Devising a communication strategy

Getting fit for purpose

MMs were aware of the benefits to be derived from making external executives in health agencies aware of the benefits to be derived from the preventative activities being undertaken by the HIA project. As these were related to proven achievements it was possible to utilize these as a basis for potential activity:

I think the core of it [the HIA project] has a good argument to enable it to continue and it has a pretty good evidence base to show what it has been doing well if it would choose to bring it altogether and summarise it. So I could see that aspect of the business and the core statutory delivery elements of it. These aspects have got a pretty good run for their money going for them...It [the HIA project] is probably going to have to do step up just to stay the same almost in terms of how it articulates itself to the wider world. But I think there is a good argument there and I think these clinical commissioning groups [external health agencies] are willing to listen ... but this is no time for us to sit on our laurels (MM5b).

The above example demonstrates how the MM had thought about the aspects of the HIA project for the education of the external executives. These were based on taking proactive steps to exploit opportunities that would lead to improved communication.

Field note 110: 31/01/14 observed MMs discussing possibilities for branding HIA project activities in order to make the service more accessible to healthcare agencies and funding streams within these. The general consensus was that the HIA project needed to be clearer on what it could provide in terms of a differential advantage over other activities preventative healthcare activities.

Planning when to take action

The challenges of impending legislation combined with spending cuts meant that the task of promoting the activities of the HIA project was becoming a major challenge:

We have really got to get a timetable... that provides details on when [a health agency] are going to make the changes. I mean it is a three-year programme there won't be any massive cuts next year that much we do know. But beyond that we do not know so it does make it quite difficult. Whether you proceed as normal and market the HIA project stating this is where we are. That in itself might save us because we are letting everyone know that we are here and this is what we are doing. Or is it a case that you might be marketing something that is potentially not going to be there because of the swathing cuts that the [health agency] are going to be making (MM8b).

The above example highlights the choices that the MM considered to be tactical in strategic intentions to alert external executives to the HIA project activities. Balanced against the challenge of launching a marketing campaign was the possibility that the HIA project might become a casualty of reduction in public spending within the macro-environment of the health arena. These circumstances created a dilemma on whether to raise the profile of the project's activities or to be prudent and deliberately keep these at a low profile.

Field note 146: 25/07/14 observed MMs expressing concerns over possible competition from the external environment and uncertainties over future provisions for DFG funding in the light of central government proposals. This led to discussions on thinking carefully about possible funding streams from other healthcare agencies.

Seeking effective methods

The strategy for aligning HIA project-activities amongst health agencies in the macro-environment was associated with achievements of preventing costlier activities from taking place:

I think the unique selling-point is that it provides the opportunity for one person to go out and actually look at the home environment. I think that should be the core so that includes looking at whether the property needs to be adapted or whether it needs to be improved and to improve the functional ability of that person. What I think we have then got is a good opportunity to align with some ... [health agency] initiatives like keeping warm, healthy eating and falls risk assessment. There are just so many opportunities (MM4b).

In the above example the MM had considered the activities that were being carried out by the HIA project and linked these to activities in health agencies that were associated with prevention. The MM had also identified the advantage that individuals working for the HIA project could exploit through a facilitated access to an individual's living environment. This afforded the opportunity to assess whether or not there was any immediate action required to make improvements.

Field note 136: 28/03/16 illustrates how MMs discussed the need to provide more robust data to demonstrate where it could add value to other health agencies. This emphasises the importance MMs attached to seeking appropriate methods demonstrating the benefits of the HIA project.

MMs concentrated their efforts to the HIA project's activities and how these could be exploited to extol its benefits to the macro-health arena:

In our little cauldron we are forcing the issue all the time day in and out but within the bigger picture of what we are doing. We are delivering adaptations and what understanding does that mean for the rest of health and social care? It could mean somebody doesn't have to go into a care home. For the rest of health what it means is that they [the customer] can come out of hospital sooner or not go into hospital. Obviously we want [a health agency] to see what advantages there are in the services we are providing (MM8a).

In the above example the MM was actively contemplating how to raise the awareness of the achievements that had resulted from activities within the HIA project. These included preventing someone from having to be taken into care or being able to exit hospital more quickly as a direct consequence of the adaptations that had been made to their house. This was also evidenced by an intention to make a health agency aware of how these activities could be used to their advantage.

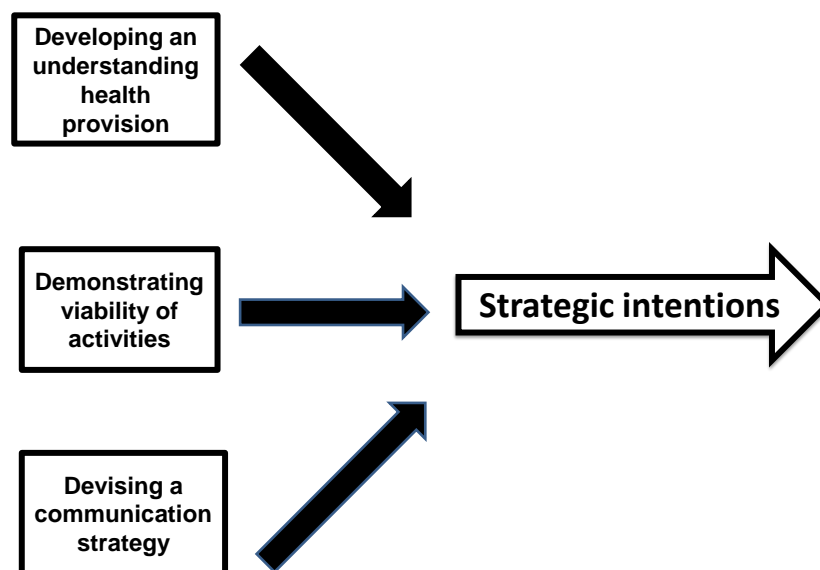
While MMs were keen to develop contacts with external executives in agencies within the macro-health environment there was an awareness that efforts needed to be prioritised to areas of activity that would maximise the chances for substantial investment:

Yesterday I sent [a health agency] 1 an e-mail asking them to be part of a bit of research about looking at how we can activate people's responsibilities for looking after their own health. I will see what they come back with I think one of difficulties things about [the health agency] is that they do not have much money and we need money to change things and [another health agency] is much more likely to be able to provide that (MM1b).

In the above example the MM drew a clear distinction between areas of activity that would be useful for collaborative purposes and the need to forge alliances with agencies that had sufficient funding to fund future income for the HIA project activities.

Figure 4 provides an overview of the intentions of MMs to engage with external executives outwards. This draws upon the second order and third order coding.

Figure 4: Strategic intentions



7.3 Lack of Strategic Success

As MMs were contemplating their strategic intent towards approaching external executives within other health agencies it was apparent that their efforts were observed to be not that effective. In particular, there were doubts expressed on clarity of purpose and these were leading to a misunderstanding of how the HIA project activities could be beneficial. Firstly, there was a perception from external providers in the macro-health environment that a number of their activities were ambiguous in terms of how these could deliver improvements. Secondly, there was a requirement for more proof on the viability of HIA project activities. Thirdly, there was a perception that the key messages emanating from attempts to raise the profile of the HIA project needed to be simplified.

Areas of concern between agencies in the macro-environment were not always readily shared. In particular, there was a common consensus that these concerns could be alleviated through constructive discussions to join up the services shared by all health agencies within the macro-environment. There were also a number of issues associated with the complexities involving the diversion of funding that was available within the macro environment. Above all, it was generally acknowledged by external executives that a way forward for gaining more viability was to work towards developing shared outcomes.

There was a perception by other health agencies that the visibility of the HIA project within the macro-health-environment was very limited. More evidence was needed to promote the achievements of the HIA project. There was also a pressing need for MMs to take strategic action and effectively communicate its key achievements to agencies in the wider macro-health arena.

The lack of strategic success of MMs in endeavouring to bring the HIA project to the attention of external executives in healthcare organisations are summarised in table 9.

Table 9: Lack of Strategic Success

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
I think it is about a better understanding of what each agency is responsible for and how one can complement the other. I think there is still an element of how can I say this? I think it is about clarity of what the [MMs] deliver... and I still think that there is a lack of clarity around ... what we legitimately can do going forward. (EE4)	Exploring ambiguity	Clarity of purpose	Lack of strategic success
When I have had dialogue with them I often feel that it is from a perception of well you know all this already well actually I don't. I don't know what you do I don't know what you do in its entirety and it would be the same as if I asked them to come into my world and tried to share my world.(EE4)	Demonstrating viability		
Engaging in dialogue becomes really really difficult because they[MMs] are trying to sell a story to us or a service to us and we are trying to get up to speed in terms of understanding “what does your service do?” and “how can you support my agenda?” (EE4).	Simplifying key messages		
Some of that involves better coordination of agencies as we have discussed because there are a lot of agencies working in this field and getting that work as joined-up as we can is a priority to us. That would be the main priority (EE2).	Joining up services	Sharing areas of concern	
It is very difficult to lever money from [another health agency] into [our health agency]. The problem is alright you have saved that one person but there are three more who have fallen down the stairs and who have taken their place. I think in principle yes but I think it is very difficult to lever money out of the overall budget of [another health agency] (EE1).	Diverting funding		
It is about looking at our shared outcomes isn't it? What are the shared outcomes that we want to deliver and that is about supporting people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. And that is a very classic one. That is a very key one and that is where aids and adaptations and home improvement can actually really support that (EE4).	Developing shared outcomes		

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
Let's say we had a perfect home improvement agency or housing stock that doesn't mean people would still stay in their homes if you didn't have other things as well. It is part of the portfolio of services that we need to be able to wrap around people when they are in need. I mean it is a key part of it because it helps make them become more independent but it's not the only one (EE1).	Providing evidence	Visibility within other agencies	Lack of strategic success
I haven't seen anything and that would be the biggest problem is that if we haven't seen anything. What are the reasons for them not producing anything? Is it because they are so successful that they don't want to promote themselves because they have got enough capacity to get going? (EE1)	Awareness raising		
While I do think that they have got some very good strategic ideas about their efficiency gains they are not then translated into a format that would inform and influence (EE4).	Communicating key actions		

7.3.1 Clarity of purpose

Exploring ambiguity

A key issue that had a direct impact on forging a closer relationship between MMs in the HIA project and external executives in health agencies was clarity on what the HIA activities were delivering:

I think it is about a better understanding of what each agency is responsible for and how one can complement the other. I think there is still an element of how can I say this? I think it is about clarity of what the [MMs] deliver... and I still think that there is a lack of clarity around ... what we legitimately can do going forward. So one of the things that I have spoken to them about is how they promote their business model because to be honest I am not clear what their business model is (EE4).

In the above example the external executives highlighted how there was a pressing need to define clear distinctions between each area responsible for the provision of health services and to clarify how each could work to the benefit of the other. From

this perspective it was apparent that MMs were currently not being effective in clearly defining their achievements. In order to be effective in raising the awareness of HIA activities there was a requirement to effectively disseminate the key messages of their business model to other health agencies in the macro-environment.

Demonstrating viability

A major deficiency was the ability for MMs to draw attention to the viability of the HIA and their vision for the delivery of this service:

I think it would be really interesting to explore the activities of those managing ... in the strategic integration of home improvement services. This could develop a collective vision value and language of existing and future services in order to influence the [external executives]. In doing that first my perception is that they need to have greater clarity and visibility about what their vision and value is ... in the first instance. And if I was a [MM] I would really want to drum home what the vision is for their services. That could be their outcomes framework whichever but it would be really valuable (EE4).

In the above example the external executive had identified that there was a requirement for a well-thought-out approach that could develop a robust argument. This would clearly specify the contribution that the HIA project's activities could provide to the wider health arena.

Simplifying key messages

It was acknowledged that the HIA project could benefit from simplifying the key messages that they were trying to convey to other health agencies in the macro-environment. MMs approached external executives with a presumption that they knew more about the activities of the service area than was actually the case:

When I have had dialogue with them I often feel that it is from a perception of well you know all this already well actually I don't. I don't know what you do I don't know what you do in its entirety and it would be the same as if I asked them to come into my world and tried to share my world. It would take quite a long time for them to understand that because it is actually very difficult it is a very complex world (EE4).

The above example demonstrates how the external executive highlighted that in all areas of the macro-health environment there was a requirement to conceptualise how much individuals operating within other health agencies were likely to be able to comprehend.

This was a situation that could be rectified if thought had been given to simplifying the message:

We know the high level, we know the periphery but we don't know the detail and we don't know the real context of each others' area. Therefore, engaging in dialogue becomes really really difficult because they[MMs] are trying to sell a story to us or a service to us and we are trying to get up to speed in terms of understanding "what does your service do?" and "how can you support my agenda?" (EE4).

This illustration provides further reasons on the value of a simplified message in terms of alerting external executives to the benefits of the HIA project as an activity.

7.3.2 Sharing areas of common concern

Joining-up services

There was a commonly defined objective of joining-up services for the benefit of all health agencies within the macro-environment. This was based on the perception that participation in this activity would facilitate easier promotion of the HIA project to agencies in the macro-health arena:

Some of that involves better coordination of agencies as we have discussed because there are a lot of agencies working in this field and getting that work as joined-up as we can is a priority to us. That would be the main priority (EE2).

The above example illustrates how aligning to the key priority of joining-up services within the macro-health-environment would be of great assistance to the MMs in strategically raising awareness of the HIA project. This would also provide the opportunity for an ongoing dialogue on how the HIA project could fit into the macro-health arena.

Diverting funding

Sharing discussions on key areas of concern was identified as a means of enabling the MMs to gain a greater understanding of the complexities associated with the pooling of resources:

It is very difficult to lever money from [another health agency] into [our health agency]. The problem is alright you have saved that one person but there are three more who have fallen down the stairs and who have taken their place. I think in principle yes but I think it is very difficult to lever money out of the overall budget of [another health agency] (EE1).

The above example illustrates how engaging with external executives from other health agencies could greatly assist MMs to gain strategic awareness of the complexities associated with leveraging money from budgets held by different health agencies. It was evident that the compelling arguments relating to the benefits of moving money away from budgets held by one health agency to another had not yielded positive results despite continual efforts to try and achieve this.

Developing shared outcomes

External executives in health agencies within the macro-health environment were receptive to the concept of sharing outcomes on common areas of concern. Engaging in conversations around key issues within areas of common concern was an effective way of alerting them to new ideas:

It is about looking at our shared outcomes isn't it? What are the shared outcomes that we want to deliver and that is about supporting people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. And that is a very classic one. That is a very key one and that is where aids and adaptations and home improvement can actually really support that (EE4).

The above example demonstrates how the MMs could exploit opportunities to alert external executives to the HIA project engaging in conversations relating to the shared outcome that enable individuals to remain in their own home. In turn this would provide them with the opportunity to provide evidence of successful outcomes and cost savings.

7.3.3 Visibility within other agencies

Figure 12 provides an overview of how the External executives conceived the HIA project to have a lack of visibility within other agencies.

Evidence of achievements

A key issue that affected better visibility of the HIA project activities was the perception of the distance that separated the services that were provided by each of the health agencies in the wider environment:

Let's say we had a perfect home improvement agency or housing stock that doesn't mean people would still stay in their homes if you didn't have other things as well. It is part of the portfolio of services that we need to be able to wrap around people when they are in need. I mean it is a key part of it because it helps make them become more independent but it's not the only one (EE1).

The above example demonstrates how this external executive had perceived the benefits of complementary health services within the wider environment that interlocked with each other. The key objective would be to have a range of related services provided by different healthcare agencies within the macro-environment that could all contribute to enabling an elderly or disabled individual maintain their independence. It was also evident that because the MMs had not been pursuing this option that there had been no subsequent opportunity for them to alert the external executive on how they could contribute to this proposal.

Awareness of HIA as an activity

The lack of visibility of the HIA project's activities within other health agencies in the macro-environment was a commonly-perceived issue. It was a key factor that prevented the ability for MMs to engage with external executives in other health agencies to raise the awareness of HIA project activities:

I haven't seen anything and that would be the biggest problem is that if we haven't seen anything. What are the reasons for them not producing anything? Is it because they are so successful that they don't want to promote themselves because they have got enough capacity to get going? Or is it because they haven't seen what is happening? Or is it because they are unsure of their

funding and so don't want to promote themselves because this may get withdrawn and they are suddenly getting referrals to a service that no longer exists in these days of austerity? (EE1).

The above example demonstrates how the lack of visibility of HIA activities was having a detrimental impact on the ability for MMs to engage with external executives in the macro-health environment. It also demonstrated the danger of working in isolation. In particular, raising awareness within related health agencies would be able to also provide the opportunity to address misconceptions about the HIA project.

Communication of key messages

A key factor preventing visibility of the HIA project's activities amongst health agencies within the macro-environment was a perception that MMs were not communicating effectively. This was despite the fact that the HIA project was able to demonstrate positive messages related to efficiency gains:

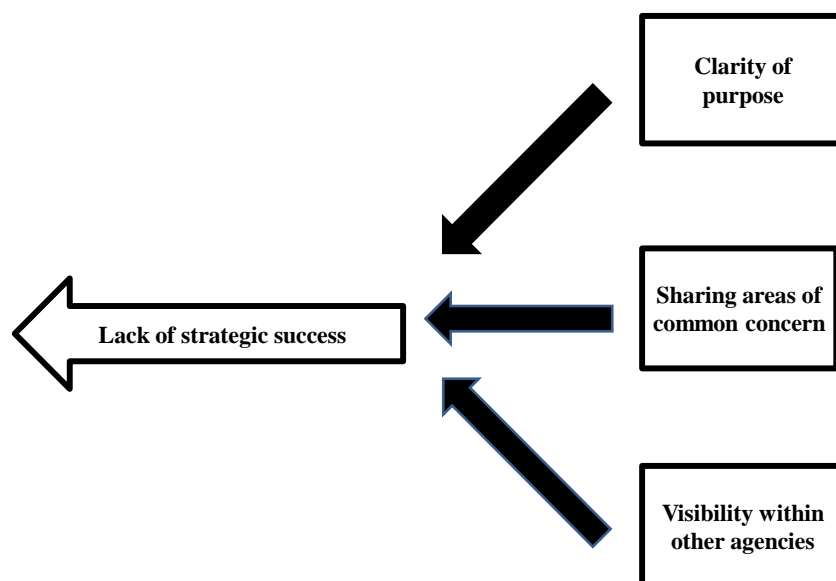
I think that their strategic thinking is efficient you know they are looking for efficiency gains and I think that that is positive. But I still think that there is a big gap in terms of then how they communicate that... While I do think that they have got some very good strategic ideas about their efficiency gains they are not then translated into a format that would inform and influence (EE4).

The above example illustrates how the external executive had identified that although the HIA project activities had evidence of delivering efficiency gains these

were not being communicated effectively within the wider health arena. This situation also prevented the ability for MMs to inform the wider health arena of the benefits being delivered by the HIA project.

Figure 5 provides an overview of the lack of strategic success of MMs in engaging with external executives outwards. This draws upon the second order and third order coding.

Figure 5: Lack of strategic success



7.4 Longer Term Strategic Aspirations

The previous section considered the way MMs were intentional rather than purposeful in their endeavours to make contact with external executives of individual agencies. This section identifies how longer term aspirations could create a situation where MMs could be more purposeful in their dealings with existing alliances. MMs were involved in contemplating the development of an understanding of health provision, demonstrating the viability of the HIA project's activities and developing a communication strategy within the health arena of the macro-environment. Owing to the fact that all of these activities were intentional external executives in the wider health environment had uncertainties on its clarity of purpose. This had caused misunderstandings on how the HIA project activities could benefit them. There was also a perception that common areas of concern could be more readily shared and that the visibility of the HIA project within external agencies was very limited. Therefore, the attempt by MMs to secure any strategic success within the wider health arena was not happening. This was due to a lack of awareness amongst external executives towards its activities. In particular, the concept of the installation of home adaptations to reduce costs for external health agencies had not been fully considered.

MMs strived to secure representation at formal meetings in order to gain an opening to forge contacts with influential external executives. When confirmation of becoming a member of these external committee meetings had been secured it was also evident that MMs saw the opportunity of using these as a platform for promoting their activities. This supports the assumption that MMs had deliberately decided to draw a distinction between contemplating making contact with external

executives on an individual basis in favour of utilising formalised structures as a means of raising awareness to gain and sustain buy-in to HIA project activities.

The longer term strategic aspirations of MMs to bring HIA project activities to the attention of external executives in healthcare organisations are summarised in table 10.

Table 10: Longer Term Strategic Aspirations

Qualitative data	First order code	Second order code	Third order code
If you know your subject and you are reading your audience correctly then you would say on this slide I am only going to focus their attention on about two to four points because I know these hit their agenda... So by focusing the presentation to say “well actually we are able to aid that process”. This is like getting that audience to eat your hand off (MM4b).	Presenting HIA activities to external executives	Working with internal alliances	Longer term strategic aspirations
We have got this permanent role ... within the county we have been asked to become part of the joint commissioning process [external committee meeting]. Now what has happened as a result of the county council through an invitation from a [corporate executive] who has agreed that we can be present on their joint commissioning board [external committee meeting. (MM1b)	Developing opportunities for engagement		
I have been pushing for this organization [the HIA project] through a scrutiny process emphasising the need to look a bit more closely at actually what it wants to be doing in health terms. So there is a greater degree of legitimacy and steer for me in terms of what I am actually going to do next within these new arrangements otherwise I am doing what I think is best.(MM1b)	Demonstrating viability externally		
Field note 79: 30/08/13 observes MMs discussing the possibility of tapping into the resources within a regional health and well being board comprising external executives through the promotion of HIA project activities. This would concentrate on showcasing the HIA project and the potential contribution it could make to preventative measure in healthcare. Efforts would also be made to make representations on how activities could be strengthened through additional funding.	Exploring funding opportunities		
The better care fund is a very key meeting and actually we have managed to achieve getting two MMs to represent us on that board. Okay they are not going to talk about [the HIA project] all the time because it is a huge agenda but by being there you are actually able to do some networking and that creates opportunities (MM4b).	Networking	Affiliating with external executives through formal meetings	Longer term strategic aspirations
We are there to make the arguments and I think if you found out what else was happening around the country a lot of joint commissioning boards[external committee meetings] do not have any housing people on them. So in that sense something has been allowed to happen which is quite innovative (MM8b).	Explaining HIA project activities		
We all come from a different place and we all talk a different language so the fact that government has pushed the transformation and come up with the better care fund and made people pool budgets is forcing everybody round the table and over time that should get to that single currency (MM8b).	Utilising discussions on pooled funding		
That is not to say that the HIA project is going to be protected by the joint commissioning board. This is partly why [another MM from the integrated HIA partnership] and myself are there to try and make sure that it is protected (MM8b).	Protecting HIA project through synergies		

7.4.1 Working with internal alliances

Developing contacts with external executives

Attempts to forge contacts with external executives in the external committee meetings followed a deliberate strategy for engagement that was strengthened by the presence of a corporate executive to emphasise the importance of the meeting:

When we went to [the health agency] meeting we depleted our presentation down to about 10 or 12 slides and even then it was a bit ad-lib from my reading of the body language. I didn't know the audience because I was just asked to go along and [a corporate executive from a local authority within the integrated partnership] was there as was the [external executive from the health agency]. It is actually about understanding what they want to hear and avoiding dwelling on what they don't want to hear. If you know your subject and you are reading your audience correctly then you would say on this slide I am only going to focus their attention on about two to four points because I know these hit their agenda... So by focusing the presentation to say "well actually we are able to aid that process". This is like getting that audience to eat your hand off (MM4b).

In the above example MMs had invited a corporate executive from one of the local authorities within the integrated partnership to support its activities. The MM had also given careful thought to the delivery of a presentation to have the maximum impact for raising the awareness of an external executive from a health agency. Careful attention was devoted to developing aspects of the HIA project that would be in accordance with the external agenda. This activity

was also deliberately targeted at gaining full attention by keeping the presentation brief and to the point in order to increase the likelihood of encouraging investment.

The challenge of building up an external network in support of HIA activities was supported through formal workshops and presentations as a means of alerting external executives to the HIA's project activities:

Also we had a workshop with a health agency because we had a project around facilitating faster hospital discharges so this provided the opportunity to raise issues in the agenda around integration... What they were promoting was that it should recognise the importance of good housing. I have also done a presentation on the HIA project to [a neighbouring health agency] (MM4b).

The above example demonstrates how the MM had been purposeful in identifying how a project on accelerating hospital discharges could be linked to the HIA project activities. This enabled the promotion of activities through workshops and presentations with the intention of building up an internal network of contacts.

Efforts were also made to ensure that any contacts that had been established were built upon:

In these circumstances we could define some sort of reference point that we could come back to even if it was to secure another invite six months later at more appropriate time. That would be preferable to having to start from scratch again (MM4b).

The above example demonstrates how the MM was careful to ensure that every time a contact was made it was endorsed with a follow-up meeting. This had the purpose of building up a network of potentially useful contacts for the future and avoiding the requirement to have to define relationships again.

MMs were keen to exploit internal contacts as a means of influencing the decision-making process of the formal health and well being partnership as a means of encouraging future investment:

The health and well being partnership [external committee meeting] uses somebody who is employed by [a colleague in another service area]. So I have that influence through that source (MM8b).

In the above example the MM had utilised their alliance with an internal contact within their local authority who had already developed relationships within the health and well-being partnership as a means of raising awareness of HIA project activities.

Field note 108: 31/01/14 observed MMs discussing their potential activities at the first commissioning board set up by regional social care and health agencies. Discussions centred around emphasising the promotion of integration of service delivery and using this as traction to gain potential buy in on the basis that this would deliver improvements and also save money.

Identifying opportunities

The purposeful activities of MMs enabled them to gain a place at a joint commissioning [external committee meeting] which enabled them to alert powerful external executives to the activities of the HIA project. This was achieved by utilising TTEs as associates in order to facilitate this activity:

We have got this permanent role ... within the county we have been asked to become part of the joint commissioning process [external committee meeting]. Now what has happened as a result of the county council through an invitation from a [corporate executive] who has agreed that we can be present on their joint commissioning board [external committee meeting]. I do not think that has happened in very many two-tier areas to be honest and this is a forum where people in [district council] housing authorities have struggled to get a voice (MM1b).

In the above example it was evident that the MM had built upon a relationship with an influential corporate executive in order to facilitate a place on a formal external committee meeting. Securing a place at this formal meeting provided MMs with a platform to commence on engagement activities that would alert external executives

to the HIA project. This achievement was highlighted as a major triumph as it was relatively rare for housing service areas to secure such representation at this external committee meeting. This provided a forum for MMs to exchange and promote the activities of the HIA project and exchange information on health-related activities within the wider health arena.

The fact that the health and well-being board as an external committee meeting was attended by elected members [political executives] providing representation for the local authorities meant that MMs were able to tap into this internal network. This involved them exploiting the relationship that they had developed internally:

How it works is the health and well being board [external committee meeting] have got the councillors [political executives] that make the decisions there with some senior officers supporting them. And then the joint commissioning board [external committee meeting], which I have been invited to with another MM, sits underneath the health and well being board so that has got a direct relationship. Everything that happens in that joint commissioning board will go up to health and well being board and the health and well being board should also then influence what goes on (MM8b).

In the above example it was evident that the MM had identified the significance of external committee meetings and the benefits of this in providing upwards influence on important decisions.

Field note 58: 06/06/13 provided an illustration of MMs confirming the importance of building relationships with corporate and political executives in order to secure representation at external committee meetings. This example demonstrates the purposefulness of MMs in persisting with finding avenues through their internal networks as a means of gaining access to venues where they could build relationships with external executives.

Demonstrating viability externally

MMs were aware of the value of developing their alliances with corporate and political executives who had powerful influence over the mechanisms within their own internal structures to strengthen their ability to exert influence within the external environment:

We are having to learn the way that other places work in a much greater depth and I have been assisted on this through the leads for health in my organization [local authority]. I have been pushing for this organization [the HIA project] through a scrutiny process emphasising the need to look a bit more closely at actually what it wants to be doing in health terms. So there is a greater degree of legitimacy and steer for me in terms of what I am actually going to do next within these new arrangements otherwise I am doing what I think is best. Although I have worked very closely with my portfolio holder [political executive] on this and this and I think the wider council needs more of a democratic in the way it engages within this new changing world (MM1b).

In the above example it was apparent that the MM had deliberately taken the time to build up an internal group of influential allies. These were then called

upon to support the ability to influence external activities at the formal meetings with health providers. The mobilisation of this internal support was then utilised to deploy support for arguments that related to the benefits of HIA activities. It was evident that the MM in this example had paid particular attention to engaging closely with their portfolio holder in order to obtain a mandate to promote activities in advance of the formal meetings.

Field note 94: 25/10/13 observed MMs discussing an invitation for representation at a joint commissioning board set up by social care and healthcare agencies within the region. This example demonstrates the proactive steps taken by MMs to gain access to venues where they could contribute to decision making in the healthcare arena.

Exploring funding opportunities

MMs were also tasked with ensuring that their activities were pitched towards tapping into the budgets that had been pooled arising from decisions taken by central government. These ongoing negotiations were taking place in conjunction with the development of relationships with influential corporate and political executives in order to secure their backing:

Overall I think they are engaged with the work that is going on and I think there is a challenge to this work as there is to all of the

work in the better care fund [pooled budget] arrangements in terms of what it can do even better, even faster, with even more cost efficiency around it. But what exactly that might look like when the basic care fund [pooled budget] details are played out is not yet clear. I know that these have been part of the better care fund [pooled budget] discussions so we have got that interconnectivity with [external executives] as well (MM5b).

In this example the MM had identified the objectives of delivering faster and more efficient services as a means of raising the profile of the HIA project amongst external executives of health agencies in the macro-environment. This situation provided the opportunity to gain greater linkages with external executives within related health care providers. The overall process was also underpinned by the persistence of MMs to ensure that they had also obtained the buy-in from their influential corporate executives.

Field note 79: 30/08/13 provided an illustration of how MMs discussed mechanisms for tapping into the resources within a regional health and well being board comprising external executives through the promotion of HIA project activities. This would concentrate on showcasing the HIA project and the potential contribution it could make to preventative measure in healthcare. Efforts would also be made to make representations on how activities could be strengthened through additional funding.

7.4.2 Affiliating with external executives through formal meetings

Networking

The securing of places at a formal influential meeting provided MMs with the opportunity to embark on networking exercises with the objective of raising awareness of HIA activities amongst External executives:

The better care fund is a very key meeting and actually we have managed to achieve getting two MMs to represent us on that board. Okay they are not going to talk about [the HIA project] all the time because it is a huge agenda but by being there you are actually able to do some networking and that creates opportunities (MM4b).

The above example demonstrates how the purposefulness of MMs enabled them to position their activities towards forging contact with corporate executives. This would also enable MMs to begin to develop contacts through networking activities by alerting external executives towards HIA project activities. This also had the potential to start engagement with external executives towards a long-term objective of obtaining support for the HIAs activities.

MMS were very aware that external executives attended the formal meetings and that this provided opportunities for them to promote the benefits of the HIA project activities:

We have been asked along to that [external committee meeting] so we have achieved good representation there. That is the forum where the clinical commissioning groups are represented so that is a big link because you have got people like the chief officer from a health agency, you have got the partnership director from a local authority 3 and an [external executive] from the unitary authority health agency. You have got relatively high representation there and it is there that we need to develop some of the ways forward. The better care fund meetings have been very interesting because these represent about 15 different work streams (MM1b).

In the above example it was evident that the MM perceived being invited to the health and well being board was an achievement and its importance was endorsed by the amount of external executives who were in attendance. This presented a number of opportunities and highlighted a number of potential work-streams that the MMs could tap into.

Field note 231: 29/05/15 observed MMs discussing progress of representation at a regional clinical commissioning group meeting comprising external executives. Discussions highlighted the progress that had been made through the networking opportunities that this forum could provide. It also facilitated opportunities to highlight how the HIA project could contribute to healthcare and accessing funding streams including the better care fund that had recently been introduced by central government.

Explaining HIA project activities

Attendance at external committee meetings could be seen as a key mechanism for leveraging more support from external executives as allies who could develop contacts. It was also something that was carried with an intention of achieving positive results:

That is what we have done over there basically, what we have said is push everyone into the same room and we will make you talk and that is what they have done with the joint commissioning board [external committee meeting]. So it might only be three meetings in but eventually that will move with a willingness to cooperate (MM8b).

The above example demonstrates how the MM was being purposeful in utilising the fact that key influential external executives were being forced into a situation where they had to discuss a wider range of activities within the regional health arena. This provided MMs with the potential to develop contacts and improve current attempts to promote the activities of the HIA project.

The fact that MMs had actually secured places on the joint commissioning board [external committee meeting] was perceived as a triumph because in comparison with what was happening nationally this was a relatively rare occurrence. It was also acknowledged that a key achievement was that the MMs had gained a voice that enabled them to promote the achievements of the HIA project:

We are there to make the arguments and I think if you found out what else was happening around the country a lot of joint commissioning boards[external committee meetings] do not have any housing people on them. So in that sense something has been allowed to happen which is quite innovative. But we just have to accept that their agenda is so big and that we are just a small part of it. We have got a voice but whether that voice means influence only time will tell. But we are certainly at the right place as I say it is a small service compared to what they are delivering and if you compare it to the savings that they have got to make (MM8b).

In the above example the MM had perceived the fact that they had been given a place on an external committee meeting was a great achievement, given that this was quite a rare occurrence. However, there was also an acknowledgement that there was a requirement to exert continual persistence over time to achieve any significant gains through this meeting.

MMs were able to utilise other external committee meetings such as the health and well-being partnership as a means of engaging the attention of external executives within the macro-health-arena through presentations to raise awareness on the HIA projects activities:

There is no problem with us going along to the health and well being board [external committee meeting] and doing a presentation related to our project and I know that [another MM in the integrated HIA partnership] has actually done a couple of presentations at that level (MM8b).

The above example demonstrates how MMs were deliberately focusing their efforts on undertaking presentations at external committee meetings in order to raise the awareness of the project. This contrasts strongly with the intentional aspirations that were discussed when considering the health and well-being board provided MMs with the opportunity to provide a detailed account of its activities and to demonstrate its achievements in preventative work to a wide group of influential MMs:

The health and well being board [external committee meeting] were briefed by [a MM] previously and the chair [political executive] would have been there I wasn't there. It is that kind of environment that is important firstly to give it [the HIA project] reputational profile, secondly to understand that this type of working is going on and thirdly because it is an important example of what we should be doing in the health and well being agenda. It speaks to both in maintaining people's health and well-being and by providing timely services. So the health and well being board was one of the key places where it got a bit of visibility (MM5b).

The above example provides a good illustration of how MMs had intentionally chosen the external committee meeting of the health and well-being board as a means of sustaining health through efficient service. The fact that this meeting was attended by very influential external executives provided MMs with the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the HIA project and how it could link into and contribute to the other activities within the health and well being agenda.

Field note 78: 30/08/13 provided an observation of MMs discussing the opportunity to showcase the HIA project at an event attended by external executives that they have recently been invited to. MMs explored the provision of examples of the customer journey. This comprised a narrative on how broken the service was at the start of the project leading to how it had subsequently improved. Considerations were also given to extolling the benefits of streamlining the steps taken to deliver home adaptations and working in partnership with other local authorities. This example highlights how MMs intended to promote the benefits of the HIA project in terms of its strategic value for healthcare prevention activities.

Utilising discussions on pooled funding

MMs identified opportunities to exploit recent central government legislation related to the discussion of the reallocation of future funding of activities through formal discussions to their advantage:

I would say that clinical commissioning groups [health agency] do not have much knowledge about disabled facilities grants historically and what they are used for. Also what benefit that has for them potentially in reducing the number of people needing acute hospital admissions because of less falls due to timely activities facilitated by work funded by disabled facilities grant activities. We have started to have those discussions more peacefully because of the better care fund [pooled budget] and the new ways by which the money will go to the local authorities with responsibility for housing (MM5b).

In the above example the MM had identified how their advantageous expertise of disabled facilities grants (DFGs) would enable them to provide a greater input to discussions on pooled funding. This enabled MMs to exploit the lack of knowledge of executives in clinical commissioning groups towards DFGs to their advantage. MMs were provided with an opportunity to explain to external executives how these DFGs were utilised. More importantly the application of DFGs could be used as a means of associating HIA project activities to the wider health arena. This would involve demonstrating how the HIA project could contribute to targets aimed at reducing the amount of acute hospital investments.

Therefore, the new arrangement for deciding on the allocation of DFGs through the pooling of budgets in the better care fund provided an excellent opportunity for MMs to alert a much wider audience of health providers to their activities:

What might make a difference is the joint commissioning board and the transformation board [external committee meetings] because the better care funding [pooled budgets] and the joint commissioning board budgets have to be pooled now. Our disabled facilities grant budget is going into that pool and therefore it may well filter back down to us but I go to the health and well being board [external committee meeting] with [another MM from the integrated partnership] and the joint commissioning board meetings [external committee meeting]. At the minute the agenda for both of these is so big across the county but it will feed down eventually. At the moment it is not like they are already

talking about our service in terms of what we could deliver instead it is just there as part of this bigger agenda. But no doubt as time goes on that situation should improve (MM8b).

In the above example the MM had identified the fact that in the future budgets had to be pooled as an opportunity for being able to gain a stronger presence at external committee meetings. The discussions on where investment should be made was seen as an opportunity for the MMs to raise awareness which in turn would enable the HIA project to gain traction as an activity that could positively contribute to the preventative agenda.

The importance of being able to discuss pooled budget arrangements through attendance at the external committee meeting of the joint commissioning board was its ability to provide MMs with an excellent opportunity to purposefully engage with external executives in other health-related agencies:

I still think that this is the most significant thing if you just talk about the joint commissioning board. You would have social care there, you have got public health there and you have got housing there and we are all talking a different language. There is no doubt about that and in the end that should be a really powerful forum for bringing people together and for bringing all of those agendas together. We all come from a different place and we all talk a different language so the fact that government has pushed the transformation and come up with the better care fund and made people pool budgets is forcing everybody round the table and over time that should get to that single currency (MM8b).

The above example demonstrates how the MM had recognised the value of this external committee meeting in providing the opportunity for different health providers within the macro-environment to communicate in a far more coherent way. The sharing of budgets and the fact that different health providers were sitting around the table provided a greater opportunity for MMs to raise the awareness of HIA activities.

Field note 93: 25/10/13 observed MMs discussing outcomes from a regional health and wellbeing board. This identified the low level of understanding amongst healthcare agencies on the contribution that the HIA project could make. Discussions also highlighted that it would be unlikely that the HIA project could secure any external funding. This example highlights the challenges facing MMs in their attempts to tap into external resources.

Illustrating synergy of project to healthcare

It was also apparent that attending external committee meetings provided MMs with the opportunity to not only act as custodians for funding decisions but also to take purposeful action to protect the HIA project:

That is not to say that the HIA project is going to be protected by the joint commissioning board. This is partly why [another MM

from the integrated HIA partnership] and myself are there to try and make sure that it is protected (MM8b).

The above example demonstrates how two MMs were utilising the external committee meeting of the joint commissioning board as a forum for protecting the HIAs activities. This also provided a good demonstration on how deliberate attempts to secure membership at external committee meetings were perceived as a very effective way of preserving its longer-term viability. This was achieved by using the new-pooled funding arrangements as a means of leveraging influence within the joint commissioning board [external committee meeting].

Observations from the data analysis also revealed how MMs were able to use the joint commissioning board as a forum for providing an interpretation of its activities for a much wider audience of external health providers:

We are big supporters of the HIA service and we genuinely believe that it can make a big difference. So MM1 and I attend the joint commissioning board and whenever we can be heard we are saying that (MM8b).

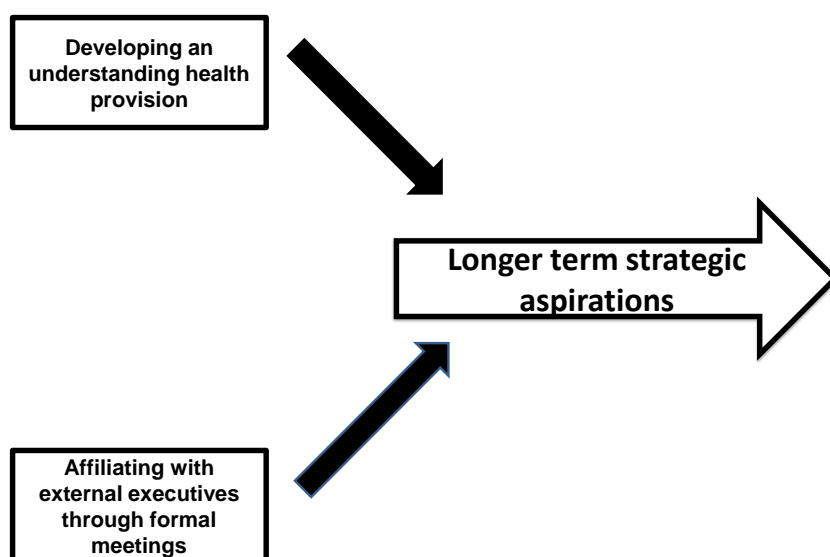
In the above example it was evident that the MM was able to use the joint commissioning board as a vehicle for providing an interpretation on the HIA projects activities. There was also a determination to ensure that positive

messages relating to the HIAs activities were continuously reinforced at each meeting.

Field note 138: 28/03/14 observed MMs discussing the necessity of having a positive story to present to the wider healthcare arena. This was a necessary means of engagement to demonstrate alignment with the strategic priorities of clinical commissioning groups.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the longer term strategic aspirations of MMs to engage with external executives outwards. This draws upon the second order and third order coding.

Figure 6: Longer term strategic aspirations



7.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to explore how MMs attempted to sell issues related to the benefits outwards to external executives in health agencies. The strategic intentions of this activity resulted in antecedents to institutional work as middle managers contemplated ways of gaining strategic awareness. The lack of success in issue-selling was identified through the examples provided by external executives. These gave an insight of their current perceptions towards the HIA project. These identified HIA project activities as lacking in purpose and currently the HIA project was defined as lacking in sufficient visibility. However, it was also acknowledged by external executives that communication could be improved if forums were developed across all health agencies to share common areas of concern. In an attempt to redress this lack of strategic success the MMs were working towards longer term strategic aspirations. This involved developing methods for closer affiliation by forming alliances with their corporate and political executives. In turn these activities were leading to the development of affiliations with external executives at countywide external committee meetings with health agencies.

MMs were observed to be engaged in antecedents of institutional work when they contemplated a strategy for engaging with external executives of health agencies within the macro-environment. This activity involved contemplating how cultural differences between the major health agencies within the macro-environment could be resolved, demonstrating the viability of the activities of the HIA within the wider health arena and developing a communication strategy to enable them to raise the awareness of HIA project activities.

Owing to the fact that MMs were only at the stage of contemplating how to raise the awareness of the HIA with external executives on an individual basis, their activities were not perceived as being that effective. Independent concerns were expressed by external executives on the clarity of purpose of the HIA project and misunderstandings as to how its activities could be beneficial. However, there was a perception that common areas of concern across health agencies in the public-sector could be addressed if more issues were shared on a regular basis. Individual accounts also revealed the visibility of the HIA project within other health agencies was very limited.

In establishing that MMs were being intentional rather than purposeful in their contacts with new external executives on an individual basis it was necessary to look for evidence of purposeful activities to establish whether or not any institutional work was being undertaken. This part of the analysis provided evidence that institutional work took place when MMs dealt with their existing alliances. MMs were keen to exploit internal alliances in order to secure representation at formal meetings, which would provide the opportunity to forge contacts with influential external executives in a formal setting. When confirmation of membership to official meetings had been secured MMs showed determination to use these as a platform for promoting their activities.

Chapter 8 - Discussion

8.1 Introduction

One of the benefits of applying institutional work is that it is very effective for examining the different aspects to managerial work involved with trying to address the various kinds of deep-seated challenges prompted by budgetary and other pressures faced by middle managers in my study. In particular, it has facilitated an in-depth study of middle management influencing strategies showing where these have been more and less likely to succeed. This has been demonstrated by structuring the discussion of findings in terms of the three institutional pillars (Scott, 2001; Zietsma and McKnight, 2009) associated with institutional work. As discussed in the literature review these constitute the regulatory pillar, the cultural-cognitive pillar and the normative pillar (Scott, 2001).

In organising the findings in terms of these three pillars it has been possible to identify some aspects to managerial work as achieving influence and being able to sell issues are easier, whereas others are more complex and difficult - or virtually impossible. This more fine-grained account has only been made possible through the combination of an institutional work lens and methods that have provided a sustained engagement with this setting - over time. This has revealed activities associated with the common challenge - improving and sustaining services amid a climate of cuts to public expenditure actually involves complex aspects of managerial work, with different outcomes. This has provided a good opportunity to

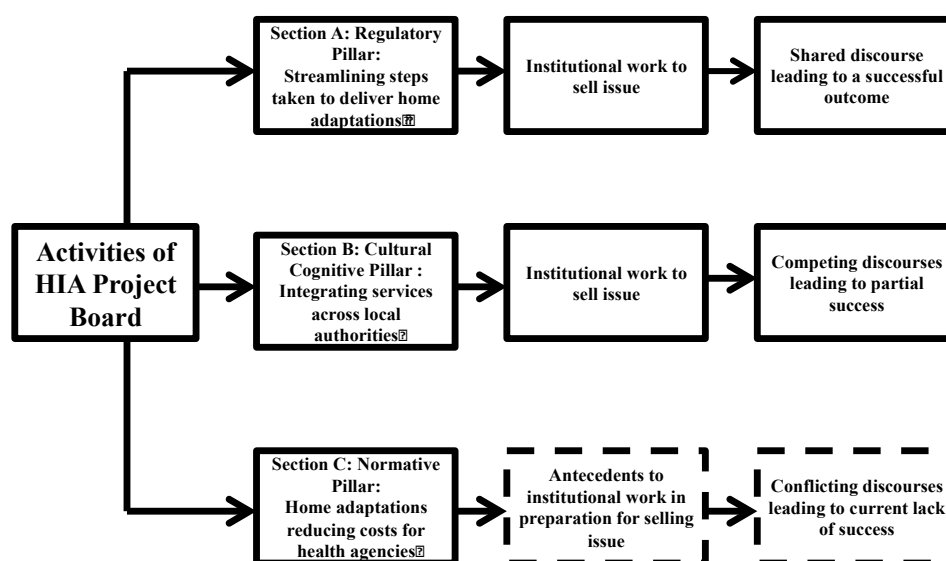
explore the challenges involved with implementing change and achieving influence. This is particularly applicable to settings where there are a number of public-sector organizations responsible for the delivery of health-related activities and scarce financial resources.

This study takes three examples of issue-selling to demonstrate how these can be applied to the institutional pillars. Firstly the issue of streamlining-steps taken to deliver home adaptations is applied to the regulatory pillar. Secondly the issue of integrating services across local authorities is applied to the cultural-cognitive pillar. Thirdly the issue of home adaptations to reduce costs for external agencies is applied to the normative pillar. Institutional work associated with trying to streamline services is most straightforward to achieve because of the presence of a common discourse that reacts to external pressures from cuts. In carrying out institutional work managers act on the regulatory pillar and in doing so are able to mobilise concepts relating to service-improvement to exert influence on the basis that this maintains strategic priorities thereby enabling middle managers to sell their priorities. In trying to integrate services, however, institutional work becomes harder as this involves creating institutions, and influence is more difficult to exert owing to a lack of a common discourse. This is understood as addressing the challenge of trying to work on the cultural-cognitive pillar, which is difficult because the six local authorities in the partnership have overlapping sets of claims to legitimacy and power. Finally, when it comes to trying to shift budgets from healthcare across to social services, to improve and adapt homes, this kind of institutional work is almost impossible. Rather than conceiving this as lacking a common discourse, the

language of institutional pillars is useful because this can be understood as the challenge of working on the normative pillar. Seen in this light this kind of institutional work aimed at creating institutions is frustrated by a clash of values.

The figure below (see Figure 7) offers a visual summary of this, and this also serves to structure the chapter.

Figure 7: Institutional pillars associated with influencing and selling issues



This figure shows in section A that institutional work on selling the issue of streamlining-steps taken to deliver home adaptations involves acting on the regulatory pillar and can be successfully achieved through shared discourse that generally leads to a successful outcome. These activities also extend activities associated with maintaining institutions through ‘policing’, ‘enabling work’ and

‘embedding and routinising’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). These have been identified as drawing on the clear connection with proving activities identified in Chapter 6 concerning the selling of issues upwards.

In section B, institutional work supports selling the issue of integrating services across local authorities involving middle managers acting on competing discourses leading to partial success. This also identifies activities associated with creating institutions through institutional work associated with ‘advocacy’, ‘defining’ and ‘constructing identities’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). These draw upon the close connection with raising awareness and interpretive activities identified previously in Chapter 6 in connection with the selling of issues upwards towards top tier executives.

In section C the antecedents to institutional work in preparing for issue-selling focuses on conflicting discourses. This identified as currently leading to a lack of success in selling a key issue. This activity associates middle managers with the intention of selling the issue of using timely home adaptations to reduce costs for external public-sector healthcare agencies. The antecedents to enacting institutional work are identified in the qualitative data collected in association with the strategic intentions of middle managers. Activities associated with creating institutions through institutional work associated with ‘changing normative associations’ and ‘constructing normative networks’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) are identified in the longer term strategic aspirations of middle managers identified previously in Chapter 7 in connection with the selling of issues outwards.

The remainder of the chapter explores the activity of issue-selling within the institutional pillars: regulatory, cultural-cognitive and normative (Scott, 2001). This then reflects upon how these activities extend prior accounts of forms of institutional work.

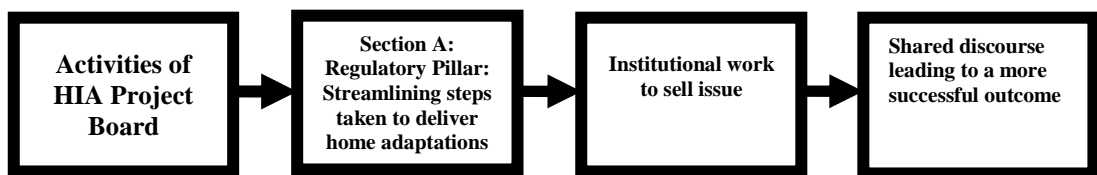
Institutional work also links human agency to the contribution of individuals and organisations that effect organisational change (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009). By moving agency to the middle ground of institutional theory (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) traditional assumptions about structure and its impact on the individual activity are relaxed. Instead “embedded agency” (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Seo and Creed, 2002) provides a means of observing ‘how actors whose thoughts and actions are constrained by institutions are nevertheless able to work to effect those institutions’ (Zeitsma and Lawrence, 2010: 189). This concept has subsequently been extended to consider the three dimensions of agency where past activities are conceived as being habitual relying on ‘iteration’, future activities represent imaginative conceptions using ‘projection’, and present activities rely on the intellectual determination of actors using ‘practical evaluation’ (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009: 47). The activities of the institutional orientation of middle managers is considered to reveal how their activities are formed by the institutions that they are maintaining and creating.

8.2 Institutional Work Regulatory Pillar

8.2.1 Streamlining-steps to deliver home adaptations

Figure 8 offers a visual summary of the activities undertaken by middle managers that are associated with streamlining of steps taken to deliver home adaptations within the regulatory pillar. This identifies the laws, rules and sanctions for regularizing the behaviour of actors (Scott, 2001; Zietsma and McKnight, 2009).

Figure 8: Regulatory pillar associated with influencing and selling issue



Middle managers within my study are observed as being involved in the issue-selling focusing on a shared discourse that is identified as leading to the success of middle managers in selling issues upwardly to top tier executives. This is because the challenge of reacting to the cuts to budgets accords with shared objectives. The attempts by middle managers to undertake purposeful activities that are a key feature of institutional work are beneficial within the regulatory pillar because they are able to mobilise the common purpose of service-improvement and this enables them to exert influence to promote their priorities. The language of institutional pillars is therefore helpful because this identifies the shared discourse within the regulatory pillar that leads to straightforward achievements.

8.2.2 Institutional work to sell issue

Middle managers within my study are observed as undertaking institutional work associated with maintaining institutions by selling issues associated with the streamlining-steps taken to deliver home adaptations. This is closely associated with the findings associated with proving activities to sell issues upwards to top executives identified in chapter 6.

Policing

Purposeful activities identify middle managers producing management information to support evidence of progress at formal corporate management team and committee meetings. This provides a contribution to the institutional work of policing involving close scrutiny of activities to ensure conformity (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Reporting on progress at corporate management team meetings is also identified as being contingent on a process of continual maintenance and reinforcement through the production of management information that supports this activity. Achievements are sometimes showcased within the regularized settings of corporate management team meetings. This is an example of a purposeful activity that draws attention to the cost benefits of streamlining service-delivery. It also contributes to a shared objective of increased customer satisfaction by reducing the time customers have to wait for an adaptation. This is also reflective of the ‘policing’ activities of institutional work.

Enabling work

Considering the activities of middle managers to prove the value of streamlining steps provides an opportunity to observe how they sell issues on the basis that they are likely to gain acceptance because they accord with the strategic priorities of the local authority. Examples include the demonstration of reducing the steps taken to install home adaptations contributing to cost reductions and cutting waiting times for customers. These activities demonstrate the purposefulness of middle managers in proving their activities on the basis that they accord with the corporate and political structures of their local authority. Concise reports are commonly used for the purpose of supporting the activities of middle managers and to provide proof that these are delivering measurable results. They are also utilised to disseminate information at corporate management team and committee meetings. Key facts from these reports are also incorporated within a business case that has been devised to promote this activity. This is reflective of the institutional work of enabling work involving the demonstrating how their activities deliver strategic outcomes associated with rules that have been created to reinforce institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Adherence to rule systems

Both of the above examples of institutional work are embraced within the wider umbrella of the adherence to rule systems (Lawrence et al., 2009; Lawrence and

Suddaby, 2006) where middle managers prove the viability of their activities by taking efforts to produce evidence that proves efficiencies are being made to reduce costs and deliver home adaptations. A key example of the purposeful work undertaken to support the adherence to rule systems within the local authority is the steps that are taken to obtain sign off to the internally produced business case. These activities centred on the necessity to bring this to the attention of top tier executives for approval before it could be used as a working document. This provides another example of how management information is utilised to support the proving activities of middle managers. In particular, middle managers are often required to attend corporate management team meetings in order to report on activities within the regulatory framework of the local authority. This forum is a necessary mechanism for sustaining buy-in by enabling middle managers to highlight the progress being made.

Embedding and routinising

Proving activities identified in chapter 6 are contingent on the ability of middle managers to demonstrate that their activities meet the key priority of delivering service priorities within greatly reduced budgets. Middle managers have, therefore, successfully sold the issue of streamlining of steps taken to deliver home adaptations through the shared discourse of contributing to cost savings. Middle managers within my thesis have also concerted their efforts to maintain their relationship with powerful allies. This process also involves middle managers undertaking the institutional work activity of repairing (Micelotta and Washington, 2013) in

instances where it is perceived that this vital relationship might be breaking down. An example of this is middle managers being purposeful by arranging supplementary one-to-one meetings with top tier executives to sustain an effective shared discourse. The eventual success provides an example of institutional work associated with embedding and routinising involving implanting an institution into daily organizational activities (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Associations with other research studies

Formal updates on progress within corporate management meetings have been identified in chapter 6 as having to be timed correctly where activities are brought to the fore when there is sufficient evidence to support a good news story. There is also a requirement for middle managers to engage in issue-selling within the annual planning cycle. In this instance middle managers use institutional work associated with maintaining institutions to purposefully pitch their successes in meeting strategic objectives of the organization against other projects that are competing for funding. To support intended outcomes within the formal structure middle managers convene individual meetings with top tier executives. These serve to prove specific achievements related to reducing costs by streamlining service-delivery. One-to-one meetings are, therefore, convened on the basis that success is more likely to be assured if messages are regularly reinforced. This activity builds upon research into institutional work associated with boundary and practice work. This observes the role of institutional work as transforming organizational fields by exploring the

activities of actors who create, maintain and disrupt institutions (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010).

Middle managers within my study also engage in proving activities when escalating issues upwards within the political organizational hierarchy if there is a need to seek agreement at a higher level within the local authority. Cabinet meetings presided over by top tier executives are cited as the highest level that issues can be progressed to in order to gain the necessary approval. However, the likelihood of successfully selling issues at committee meetings is better enhanced by developing and maintaining a special relationship outside of these formal venues. This enables middle managers to gauge any areas of apprehension that are likely to affect success. Within the research area of institutional work this responds to a call for more research into the way professionals use communication skills to secure resources (Suddaby and Viale, 2011).

Middle managers within my study skilfully manipulate the activity of gaining the buy-in from top tier executives by drawing upon previous experiences of engagement. An example of this is demonstrated by the purposeful behaviour to ensure top tier executives only have to decide on one issue at a time. This has proved to be more favourable than previous experiences as there is reluctance for top tier executives to agree a number of options all at once. There is also a particular requirement for middle managers to use opportunities to prove that their activities accord with corporate strategy by skilfully managing areas that might be deemed as being contentious. This includes efforts to tailor the relationship with top tier

executives in order to meet with success. This is demonstrated by the decision to pilot contentious issues as a means of gaining the acceptance of top tier executives. In this instance issues are able to be sold on the basis that the pilot provides a get-out clause where it is deemed that experimentation does not meet with corporate priorities. Top tier executives can, therefore, be reassured that they have the facility to exert the sanction of discontinuing this experiment in instances where it is felt that an activity is straying into an area that the regulatory framework can no longer support. This provides a further insight into previous research into the legitimization of innovations through a number of purposeful activities to legitimize these (Van Dijk et al., 2011).

Institutional orientation of middle managers

The institutional orientation of middle managers is considered within Battilana and D'Aunno's (2009) conception of agency as varying according to the dimension of agency that is a predominant feature of the institutional work enacted. This draws heavily upon Emirbayer and Mische's concept of the three dimensions of agency (1998). In this instance the proving activities undertaken by the middle managers when streamlining steps taken to deliver home adaptations are governed by iterative agency. This identifies a direct link between the efforts by middle managers to provide evidence of their achievements and the strategic priorities of top tier executives in encouraging methods for minimising duplication in response to operating services on reduced budgets. This also contributes to a call for more research that explores the linkage between different types of agency and the institutional work enacted in response to this.

8.2.3 Shared discourse leading to a mainly successful outcome

The activity of sharing a discourse between middle managers and top tier executives within the regulatory pillar provides an example of successful issue-selling (Dutton and Ashford, 1993). Evidence of efficiencies being made to reduce costs supports previous research identifying middle managers as playing a pivotal role in identifying new ideas and mobilising resources around these new ideas (Dutton et al., 1997). This is underpinned by management control systems (Marginson, 2002) that are initiated to monitor the efficiencies being achieved and this information is subsequently utilized as a reporting mechanism at corporate management team and committee meetings. Considering this situation within the context of institutional work, therefore, provides a contribution to previous literature. It emphasises the importance of the purposeful activities of middle managers to ensure that management information is continuously produced in support of issue-selling within the environment of reacting to external pressures arising from budgetary reductions.

Activities of issue-selling towards corporate executives provide middle managers with the opportunity to call attention to their achievements (Dutton et al., 1997). This is on the basis that it complies with the regulatory requirement to reduce costs. As such it supports a strategic issue that is highlighted within the regulatory framework of the local authority. This activity has synergies with the concept that the willingness to sell issues will increase if they are likely to receive a favourable reception. This is an important motivational driver that is likely to act as an incentive for middle managers (De Clerq, et al., 2011). My study highlights how strategic issues that are formally identified, as priorities for action by top tier

executives are conducive to the motivation of middle managers. It provides them with the opportunity to sell issues on the basis that they accord with the regulatory requirements of the organization.

Activities undertaken within the regulatory pillar identify the perceptions of middle managers within the context of their willingness to actively change the strategic agenda of an organization. This is achieved through the process of issue-selling (Dutton et al., 1997). Within my study it is evident that success is achieved because the changes being introduced identify with the corporate requirement to deliver services on reduced budgets. This also accords with later research that identifies how managers are able to champion options by taking advantage of value-creating opportunities (Barnett, 2008). It also identifies with the concept of middle managers as being effective change-agents (Sonenshein, 2012). However, observing this activity through the lens of institutional work provides a more detailed explanation on the importance of satisfying regulatory requirements that have been defined by corporate and political executives. This provides opportunities for shared discourse between middle managers in the context of this study and top tier executives that leads to effective issue-selling.

Activities that have been identified by top tier executives as strategic priorities also provide middle managers with the necessary impetus to think about how they can modify service-delivery within their area in order to meet this objective. The streamlining of steps taken to deliver adaptations is, therefore, an issue that is appropriate to merit the attention of top tier executives (Dutton et al., 1997). More

recent research explores the objectives that are set by organizational controls and how these can reduce role conflict (Floyd and Lane, 2000). Andersen (2004) also highlights the importance of middle managers in participating in strategic planning. The involvement of middle managers in producing effective arguments to raise the profile of an issue amongst other issue sellers that are also competing for scarce resources has been identified by Raes, et al., (2011). While Rouleau and Balogun (2011) highlight an important role of middle managers in conducting conversations that gain attention and encourage investments upwardly. Observing the institutional work undertaken by the middle managers within my study adds a further dimension to this research. It highlights how successful issue-selling place takes place within an environment that is provided by the shared discourse taking place within the regulatory pillar.

My study identifies middle managers as paying attention to the characteristics of political executives as the target for issue-selling (Dutton et al., 1997). This activity often involves middle managers reading the context and assessing whether or not it is favourable to sell issues (Dutton et al., 1997). Hoon's (2007) study identifies how middle managers are able to legitimize the importance of an issue through strategic conversations. My observations of the institutional work of middle managers provide a greater understanding of the complexities of conducting strategic conversations with top tier. These are identified by the selling of one issue at a time and piloting contentious activities on the basis that this provides the scope for discontinuing activities if they are deemed to fall outside corporate priorities. Studying the involvement of middle managers within the context of the regulatory

pillar, therefore, identifies the involvement of middle managers in assessing the context for selling an issue upwards towards top tier executives.

Issue-selling activities towards top tier executives also involve middle managers in behind-the-scenes activities to sustain their buy as part of these formalities. The streamlining of steps taken to deliver adaptations can be conceived as a response to economic pressures that cause middle managers to be more proactive in issue-selling (Dutton et al., 1997) in direct response to the corporate priority of reducing costs. Piderit (2000) extends this concept as an example of a response to change from the bottom up. Barnett (2008) identifies how managers decide to champion options on the basis that this takes advantage of value-creating opportunities. Ahearne et al., (2014) also identify the direct correlation between middle managers being motivated to act strategically in issue-selling within pressurised environments. My study contributes to this previous literature by correlating the institutional regulatory requirement to reduce costs with the successful discourse taking place to develop and sell an activity that middle managers have developed in response to meeting this challenge.

The utilization of institutional work provides an explanation to successful streamlining of service-delivery that is not just contingent on effectively working within the organizational structure. Instead, delivering issues that accord with the common discourse of reacting to cuts within the regulatory pillar enables the deployment of concepts associating the priorities of top tier executives. These

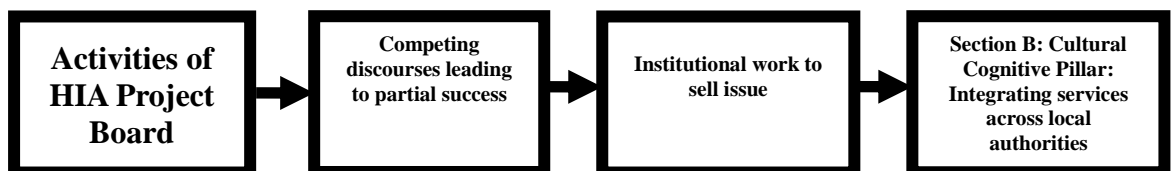
factors enable middle managers to influence and promote the concept of streamlining-steps taken to deliver home adaptations.

8.3 Institutional Work: Cultural-Cognitive Pillar

8.3.1 Integrating services across local authorities

Figure 9 offers a visual summary of the activities undertaken by middle managers that are associated with integrating services across local authorities within the cultural-cognitive pillar. The cultural-cognitive pillar is characterised by activities that are undertaken on the basis that they are conceived as being the right thing to do and follow patterns of conformity (Scott, 2001; Zietsma and McKnight, 2009).

Figure 9: Cultural-cognitive pillar associated with integrating services across local authorities



Middle managers within my study are observed as being involved in the issue-selling of integrated service-delivery within an environment that operates within the competing discourses of a group of local authorities. This identifies middle

managers as achieving partial success in selling the issue of integrating service-delivery upwardly to their top tier executives. The reason why success is only partial is because although this is conceived as the right thing to do by middle managers they need to exert influence upwardly within their own authority before this objective can be fully accepted. In particular, the joint delivery of home adaptations directly challenges the authority and jurisdictional claim of the top tier executives within their individual local authorities. The attempts by middle managers to undertake purposeful activities that are a key feature of institutional work within the cultural-cognitive pillar are, therefore, contingent on their ability to sell this issue amid a climate of competing discourses. This leads to a series of interventions that are enacted on the basis that they are likely to maximise a successful outcome in attempting to sell the benefits of integration. In particular, middle managers within my study are observed exploiting opportune moments, making efforts to exert influence, developing relationships and promoting the case for aligning integrated service-delivery to future corporate priorities.

8.3.2 Institutional work of creating institutions to sell issue

Opportune moments are taken advantage of by middle managers within my study in order to engage with their top tier executives. These are represented in the activities of raising awareness and interpreting identified in chapter 6.

Advocacy

Raising awareness opportunities are utilised to draw attention to the benefits of delivering home adaptations through the integration of services with neighbouring local authorities. This activity is representative of institutional work associated with creating institutions where ‘advocacy’ mobilises buy in through deliberately targeted persuasion (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). This activity of engagement is undertaken with the knowledge by middle managers that it is an activity requiring constant attention.

Constructing identities

Middle managers are identified as being purposeful in challenging the established way of service-delivery. This activity utilised interpretation activities identified in chapter 6 to demonstrate how integration can achieve a better outcome for customers and that a joined-up approach is able to achieve efficiencies. My study also identifies the efforts of middle managers in raising awareness to gain support from top tier executives towards the concept of integrated service delivery. A key selling-point is that the HIA project facilitates the utilization of the expertise of assessment officers from housing departments, within the jurisdiction of district councils, and occupational therapists working within the county council. Middle managers have managed to achieve a favourable response to this initiative by focusing on achievements of integration through endeavours to secure backing. Another activity that has assisted progress has been to pilot this activity within both regions through

securing the authority to undertake these activities informally within a phase of experimentation. This allows for transitioning from the old to new ways of working and has been achieved by securing the agreement from corporate and political executives to integrate services in a relatively informal and unregulated arrangement.

However, middle managers are also aware that their activities will eventually be required to operate within a formally-regulated environment. Empirical evidence highlights that in spite of the best efforts of middle managers integrated service-delivery has so far only achieved partial success as total integration across the county has yet to be achieved. Four local authorities have integrated their services within one region of the county and three local authorities are finalizing integration for the remainder of the region. These activities are representative of institutional work associated with creating institutions involving ‘constructing identities’ describing the association between individuals and the field that they are operating in (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Defining

Interpreting issues within the strategic priorities of top tier executives are also of particular importance as a resource to be drawn on in circumstances where intervention from a higher level is required. Part of the responsibility of middle managers is to enlist the support of their corporate executives to unblock issues of cultural difference that arise between individual local authorities. In certain

instances it has been necessary to address these differences in ethos by enlisting the support of corporate executives to raise this as a concern at countywide meetings of corporate executives. Extreme instances would include where an authority might be considering leaving the integrated partnership and the intervention of a corporate executive is required. There are also particular challenges associated with engaging the attention of corporate executives from different local authorities within the two integrated partnerships of the county. Such attempts at successful engagement are often thwarted because of the cultural differences existing between each respective organization. This is reflective of the institutional work activity of ‘defining’. This is associated with devising rules defining who should be members within a hierarchical framework of a field (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Associations with other research studies

Keeping the two coalitions of integrated local authorities together within the county is identified by middle managers within my study as being incredibly hard work needing constant attention. Efforts to sustain the cultural-cognitive processes that facilitate integrated service-delivery have involved proactive engagement with corporate executives. These have been centred on the argument that under the specific circumstances this is the most logical thing to do. This message has been reinforced through regular briefings clarifying particular issues relating to integrated service-delivery. The development of relationships built on trust between middle managers and their top tier executive is a major component to effective issue-selling. This is evidenced through the experience of one middle manager having a change of

corporate executive. In this situation activities to muster support for integrated service-delivery were stalled until their relationship with the new incumbent had been built up sufficiently to enable progress to continue. Securing the buy-in from top tier executives has also been achieved through providing evidence on the appropriateness of integrating service-delivery based on its contribution to strategic objectives. Issue-selling activities associated with cultural-cognitive processes are, therefore, contingent on middle managers convincing top tier executives of the benefits of integration. In these circumstances this issue is sold on the basis that it is the most logical way to deliver timely home adaptations. These activities build upon the application of institutional work to the professional project that has previously been explored by Suddaby and Viale (2011). In particular, it provides a greater insight into the way professionals use communication to secure additional resources and bring about change.

Apprising political executives on integrated service-delivery activities involves a fine-tuned approach towards gaining the buy-in from top tier executives into this concept. This is often more effectively achieved through one-to-one meetings aimed at addressing the cultural-cognitive complexities. The argument of integration based on its appropriateness for timely home adaptations is particularly effective for gaining the buy-in of political executives. Good relationships with top tier executives greatly assists with enabling the issue of integrated service-delivery to gain greater acceptance. One middle manager cites being purposeful in conducting meetings with their top tier executive each fortnight. This serves to maintain an ongoing relationship facilitating a constant reinforcement of the issue of integrating service-delivery. As top tier executives have the ultimate sanction on strategic

activity the development of effective relationships is a necessary activity. However, middle managers also need to manage the relationship with their top tier executives sensitively and this requires them to gain support on the basis that integrating the timely provision of home adaptations with neighbouring local authorities will achieve the most effective outcomes. This activity builds upon findings identified in Reay et al's., (2006) study associated with the requirement for more research that focuses on how middle managers can be encouraged to be more involved in change initiatives. My thesis supports the assertion that middle managers can utilise their embeddedness to facilitate change in order to achieve small gains.

A key factor to enable the selling of the issue of integrated service-delivery is for middle managers to find methods to align this to corporate priorities. Certain middle managers have identified its political significance on the basis that this activity follows the orthodoxy of delivering services on reduced budgets. In this instance the challenge has been to convince top tier executives of its political significance in order to gain their buy-in. Attempts have so far included extolling the benefits of integrated working on the basis that this delivers benefits of economies achieved through minimising duplication in service-delivery. This provides an example of how the purposeful activities of middle managers to address the complexities of competing discourses gains partial success in advocating the concept of institutional change.

Institutional orientation of middle managers

As has been considered earlier in this discussion chapter, the agency of middle manager is associated with the governing dimension of agency within the institutional work enacted (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009). The raising awareness and interpreting activities undertaken by middle managers in integrating services across local authorities are representative of practical evaluative agency. This is situated in present day activities identifying an association with the purposeful activities of middle managers to demonstrate the benefits of partnership working which falls outside the strategic priorities of top tier executives. This also demonstrates a requirement for middle manager to exercise far more discernment when brokering the advantages of this concept in order to gain the desired upwards buy in to this activity. This tension between the intentions of middle managers to configure the delivery of services differently and the strategic priorities for top tier executives also provides a contribution to calls for research that explores the psychological factors that impact on agency (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009; Rousseau, 1978).

8.3.2 Competing discourses leading to partial success

The activity of operating within an environment of competing discourses provides an example of how middle managers judge organizational situations for issue-selling on the basis that they can be favourable or unfavourable (Dutton et al., 1997).

Subsequent studies identify how competing discourses between middle managers and the challenge of selling these upwardly provides an explanation on the cultural and cognitive aspects of issues selling. This provides an explanation of how the

activity of promoting integrated services across local authorities within my study involves middle managers identifying favourable cues for issue-selling (Dutton, Ashford, Lawrence and Miner-Rubino, 2002). Operating within the cultural-cognitive pillar highlights middle managers as having to take more advantage of opportune moments to sell issues to identify any synergies that exist between competing discourses. The activities of middle managers can, therefore, be understood as promoting ideas through formal and informal channels (Howell and Boies, 2004) These activities are also identified as the methods managers utilize to identify and sell issues within their work programme and how middle managers take advantage of activities that can be seen to add value (Barnett, 2008). The extent to which middle managers are likely to become positive change-agents by utilizing issue-selling is also contingent on the conduciveness of the environment for selling change (Sonenshein, 2012). Within the context of the cultural-cognitive pillar this involves the challenge of selling issues on the basis of what represents the most logical activity to follow. Factors that contribute to effective issue-selling have been identified as the effectiveness of connections with stakeholders and the independent motivation required to facilitate a favourable outcome (Chen et al., 2014).

Observing how middle managers exploit opportune moments within my study provides a contribution to this research by highlighting the importance of effectively meeting the challenge of selling an activity falling outside established ways of carrying out activities. In turn, this reveals how partial success can be achieved by addressing the issue of competing discourses with the argument of choosing the best course of action within a specific set of circumstances.

The ability for middle managers to sell the issue of integrated service-delivery within the cultural-cognitive pillar is contingent on the extent to which they are able to exert influence with their corporate and political executives. A key aspect of this activity is to assess the stakes involved by reading the organizational context and assessing the likelihood of success prior to issue-selling (Barnett, 2008; Dutton et al., 1997; Rouleau and Balogun, 2011). This activity also emphasises the importance of recognising how responses to change are often generated from the bottom up (Piderit, 2000). The ability for middle managers to exert influence is also contingent on the extent of their autonomy and their ability to take the initiative on promoting issues that can affect the strategic direction of the organization (Anderson, 2004). This activity is also conceived as issue crafting in linking issues to the values of the organization by specifically using language that influences the situation (Sonenshein, 2006). The dynamics of organizational productivity can also be directly linked to the proactive behaviour associated with issue-selling (Grant and Ashford, 2008). My study identifies how observing activities of middle managers through the cultural-cognitive pillar identifies them as exerting influence through selling the concept of integrated working. This is specifically highlighted in their endeavours to demonstrate the benefits of blending the expertise of housing assessment officers with occupational therapists. It is also evidenced in their ability to gain the authority to experiment with delivering integrated services on a project basis prior to seeking the authority of formalising this within the structure of respective local authorities.

A key factor that influences the extent to which issue-selling is likely to be effective within the cultural-cognitive pillar is how middle managers can cultivate an effective relationship with their top tier executives. Dutton et al., (1997) identify the

receptivity of top tier executives to ideas as an indicator as to whether or not middle managers will engage in the activity of issue-selling or not. Subsequent studies have identified factors that influence the conditions that are conducive for top tier executives to receive issues from middle managers. Milliken et al., (2003) extend this earlier study by identifying how middle managers are reluctant to sell issues if they feel that these will be received negatively. Middle managers have also been observed as being governed by the extent to which they perceive upward receptivity to be favourable (Ling, et al., 2005). The ability to champion new ideas has also been linked to middle managers deciding to go beyond their expected responsibilities (Mantere, 2005). This also highlights the importance of strategic conversations (Hoon, 2007) in facilitating this activity. All of these factors highlight the importance middle managers within my study placed on developing effective relationships with corporate and political executives. More recent studies identify how issue-selling improves when individuals believe their efforts will benefit the organization. In this instance satisfaction is identified as a key motivational driver for issues selling (De Clercq et al., 2011). My study identifies the purposeful activities of middle managers in deploying a fine-tuned approach to developing effective relationships with top tier executives. It also highlights how these relationships need continual effort in order to enable middle managers to reinforce the perceived benefits of integrated service-delivery. Cultivating these relationships enables middle managers to build up sufficient trust to engage in the cultural-cognitive processes of selling an issue on the basis that this is the logical thing to do in the circumstances.

The aligning of the issue of integrated service-delivery towards future corporate priorities highlights the attempts of middle managers to identify themselves with the social context (Dutton et al., 1997). This activity identifies with how middle managers actively shape issue-selling through moves to achieve a successful outcome in a political and contextually-embedded situation by joining the initiative with organizational priorities (Dutton et al., 2001). Within my study part of the key to being successful in selling issues within the cultural-cognitive pillar is through the identification of synergies with issues that draw attention to corporate priorities. The importance of this activity has been identified by Hoon (2007) in terms of calling attention to issues and providing much-needed information. The activity of issue making has also been identified as being a key part of the strategic decision-making process (Oomens and Van den Bosch, 1999). Within my study middle managers are keen to extol the benefits of integrated working on the basis that the pooling of resources amongst a number of organizations can lead to avoidance of duplication and contribute to reducing costs.

The utilization of institutional work provides an explanation to the partial success associated with integrating service-delivery. Currently this exists amongst local authorities within two distinct regions within the county. Cultural-cognitive processes are not just contingent on satisfying objectives within the organizational structure. Instead the challenges of selling issues within the cultural-cognitive pillar identify the difficulties of achieving a successful outcome within overlapping sets of power bases. Purposeful activities by middle managers to address this situation include deploying opportune moments, seeking efforts to influence, developing effective relationships with top tier executives and aligning this issue to future

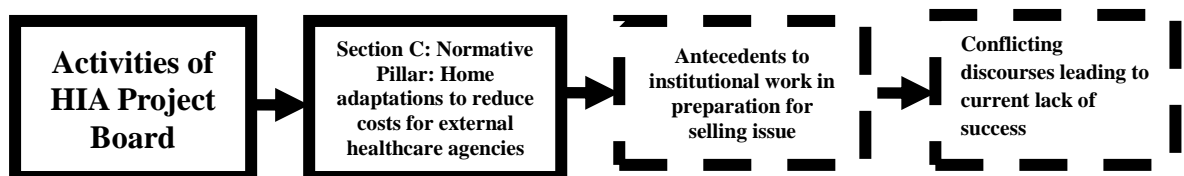
corporate priorities. The language of institutional pillars is helpful in identifying the challenges of working to address competing discourses within the cultural-cognitive pillar on the basis that integrating the delivery of timely home adaptations across the county is the right thing to do within this specific set of circumstances.

8.4 Institutional Work: Normative pillar

8.4.1 Home adaptations reducing costs for external agencies

Figure 10 offers a visual summary of the activities undertaken by middle managers that are associated with home adaptations to reduce costs for external health agencies within the normative pillar. The normative pillar is characterised by activities within a framework linking social obligations and moral standards that actors are obliged to follow (Scott, 2001; Zietsma and McKnight, 2009).

Figure 10: Normative pillar associated with home adaptations to reduce costs for external agencies



Middle managers within my study are observed as being involved in the antecedents to institutional work in preparation for issue-selling. This activity is focused towards a conflicting discourse that is identified as currently leading to a lack of success. It

explores attempts by middle managers to sell the issue of home adaptations to reduce costs towards external executives in healthcare agencies. This situation can be attributable to the challenge of shifting budgets from healthcare across to local authority services. To date, attempts to leverage funding from this source is proving to be virtually impossible. This has created the situation where attempts by middle managers to undertake purposeful activities that are a key feature of institutional work are frustrated. Instead, middle managers are involved in a prolonged state of contemplating how to tackle this issue. The language of institutional pillars identifies this as the challenge of working in the normative pillar. Within this context any purposeful attempts to sell issues are frustrated by a greater overriding factor represented by a clash of values.

8.4.2 Antecedents to institutional work in preparation for selling issue

The antecedents to undertaking purposeful activities that are integral to institutional work highlights the current lack of success of middle managers to become fully engage in this. In particular, issue-selling related to the concept of the installation of home adaptations to reduce costs for healthcare agencies has associations with the middle managers' attempts to shift funding towards this activity. The following section concentrates on the antecedents to institutional work contemplated by middle managers in preparation for issue-selling.

It is evident that attempts by local authority middle managers to develop an understanding of health provision are not leading to purposeful activities of

engagement with external executives. Instead antecedents to undertaking purposeful institutional work predominate considerations of conflicting discourses leading to a lack of success in effectively selling issues outwards. This precursory stage observes middle managers within my study as deliberately keeping their engagement with external top tier executives at a low profile. However, there is, nonetheless, evidence of preparatory work and contemplations associated with issue-selling and deciding on when would be the most appropriate time to embark on engagement exercises. My study also identifies how middle managers explore mechanisms for resolving current cultural differences that are perceived as preventing more effective communication from taking place within the wider healthcare arena.

Attempts by middle managers to devise a communication strategy to target-healthcare agencies on the activities of the HIA project is a good example of the antecedents to enacting institutional work. Middle managers within my study are at the preparatory stage of this activity that is anticipated will increase buy-in to the concept of timely installation of home adaptations to reduce healthcare costs. Middle managers are also aware of the need to decide on the most appropriate time for launching this activity. They are also keen to develop positive good news stories to extol the benefits of timely home adaptations for service users. This involves them undertaking a considerable amount of preparatory work in attempting to align their achievements towards the strategic priorities of healthcare. While it is anticipated that this will help improve raising the profile of home adaptations the likelihood of it being effective in attracting additional investment has yet to be established.

An analysis of the feedback from qualitative interviews with external executives demonstrates how the efforts of middle managers within my study are observed as being not that effective and there are reservations on their clarity of purpose. This has created misunderstandings on how the activities of middle managers can add benefit to activities within the wider healthcare arena. This is evidenced by a general consensus amongst external executives that more proof of the benefits of the activities of middle managers is required and that key messages need to be simplified.

However, external executives also see the value of middle managers participating in discussions linked to joining-up services and addressing the complexities associated with pooled funding arrangements. The overriding perception amongst external executives in healthcare agencies is that the visibility of the activities of timely home adaptations to reduce costs for healthcare is limited. This suggests that more evidence is needed to promote the achievements of the activities of middle managers and for them to effectively communicate their achievements to healthcare agencies. Nonetheless, these suggestions would only be effective within an environment that encourages shared discourse rendering the extent to which such activities could make a genuine difference at best, questionable. In particular, external executives have their own mechanisms for maintaining the status quo of their existing institutions. This provides a contribution to Micelotta and Washington's (2013) study identifying how repair work to maintain institutions enables powerful actors to reverse change and re establish the status quo. In this instance it is the top tier executives in external healthcare agencies who are in the privileged position.

Similarly Currie et al's., study (2012) define how medical professionals are able to manipulate institutional maintenance to sustain their dominance where the introduction of new practices threatens their power and status. This study extends this concept to consider the advantageous position of external executives when approached with ideas from less powerful representatives from other agencies.

Exploring the antecedents to institutional work has provided an opportunity to consider an area of activity that has received very limited attention in previous academic literature. It has also provided the opportunity to undertake a deep exploration into the precursory activities of middle managers in favour of proceeding to the activity of issue-selling. This can be explained as the difficulty in making headway with the normative prescriptions of external organizations.

Changing normative associations

Issue-selling is predicated on the basis that the activities delivered through home adaptations provides a contribution to preventative activities and reduces the requirement for costlier measures later on. The key preparatory work undertaken by middle managers has involved defining the barriers that are currently preventing constructive discussions between both parties from taking place. Owing to the fact that middle managers are heavily immersed in the precursory stages they are not proceeding to the formality of issue-selling. This has the consequence that the awareness of their activities is currently very limited amongst external executives.

This situation highlights a perceived misalignment between the desires of middle managers to sell issues and a lack of visibility of these activities amongst external executives. This situation masks the fact that middle managers within my study have developed a far greater understanding of potential avenues for engagement. It also explores the complexities of trying to sell an issue within a climate of conflicting discourses. This is attributable to the marked differences in rules and values between organizations. The complexity of this situation is synonymous with the institutional work of ‘changing normative associations’ which involves reforming and reconnecting associations for practices including practices impacting on both cultural and moral principles (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Creating institutions – constructing normative networks

Current attempts by middle managers to raise the issue of timely home adaptations to reduce long-term healthcare costs within external cross-agency committee meetings identifies middle managers as being more comfortable when utilizing their internal contacts. This defines top tier executives from their own local authorities playing an integral role in enabling middle managers to gain attendance at external committee meetings as a means of gaining greater contact with external executives in healthcare agencies. This activity can be explained on the basis that middle managers are able to utilise their familiarity of organizational values in conjunction with the top tier executives of local authorities. Relationships that have already been developed internally are, therefore, effectively used as conduits to gain a place on external cross-agency meetings. These meetings are identified by middle managers as being

important for providing the potential to engage with external executives and pave the way for possible future one-to-one meetings that will enable them to effectively engage in issue-selling. However, it is also evident that the clash of values between agencies has contributed to the restraint of middle managers in proceeding to formally engage in issue-selling. This is in contrast to their ease in upwardly engaging and forming relationships with their internal top tier executives. These challenges highlight the complexity of enacting institutional work that is associated with 'constructing normative networks' defining organizational connections between different agencies eventually leading to their sanctioning that they are accepted by the predominant peer group as being normatively compliant (Lawrence and Suddaby: 2006).

Associations with other research studies

The attempts to bring about change by gaining buy in from external executives therefore, needs to be set within the context of powerful actors with competing agendas and their ability to maintain the status quo through maintenance. This thesis therefore, has synergies with the activity of formal dining at Cambridge university (Dacin et al., 210) emphasising the strong effect that institutional maintenance has on individuals beyond performing and enacting rituals. Similarly Lok et al., (2013) identify micro-practices that serve to maintain institutions and how these immunise organizations against institutional breakdown. Having established the powerful effects of institutional maintenance it is possible to provide an explanation on why

middle managers in my research activities decided to remain in the antecedents to institutional work.

Middle managers within my study are bolstered by the fact that they have managed to secure representation at external cross-agency committee meetings. However, it remains to be seen whether or not these will prove advantageous in enabling the anticipated networking that they envisage taking place with external executives. Middle managers have also been able to use their attendance at external cross-agency committee meetings as a forum for undertaking presentations to raise awareness amongst external executives. These activities have provided detailed accounts of good news stories in anticipation that they will gain the buy-in from external executives to the issue of timely home adaptations as a means of reducing healthcare costs. However, as there have not yet been any tangible results associated with shifting budgets from health agencies towards this initiative the results from these efforts also remain inconclusive. This activity will also be governed by the extent to which powerful actors in external health agencies will want to maintain institutions within their respective organizations.

Institutional orientation of middle managers

The antecedents of middle managers towards enacting institutional work associated with gaining buy into the concept of home adaptations to reduce costs for external healthcare agencies have synergies with projective agency (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). The future orientated approach of middle

managers provides an explanation as to why their efforts are focussed on intentional rather than purposeful activities. Setting this within the context of dimensions of agency and forms of institutional work also associates the antecedents to institutional work with 'inventing' and 'creating proto institutions' (Ibid, 2009: 48). This situation contributes to the question relating to the self awareness of actors and the extent to which this impacts on their intentions (Seo and Creed, 2002).

8.4.3 Conflicting discourses leading to current failure

The activity of operating within an environment of conflicting discourses provides an example of how middle managers are sensitive towards selling issues within the context of meeting socially acceptable standards of behaviour (Miliken et al., 2003). This has also been highlighted as a fear to speak out because of the risk or reputational harm (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino and Edmondson, 2009). Similarly Detert and Trevino (2010) highlight how unfamiliar situations impacts on the willingness to raise issues. Viewing these sensitivities within the normative pillar provides an explanation as to the complexities of attempting to sell issues within an environment that creates ambiguities on what is considered as being socially acceptable. This situation is further exacerbated where there is adversity towards the shifting of budgets from one public-sector agency to another.

The process of selling issues across public-sector health agencies also has synergies with previous research that identifies how any risk of norm violations causes a reluctance to sell issues (Crant, 2000; Dutton et al., 2001; Howard-Grenville, 2007). Morrison (2011) also highlights how the raising of issues is influenced by the

supportiveness or un-supportiveness of the organization. The findings from my study provide an additional contribution in identifying how middle managers spend a considerable length of time in the precursory stage in these circumstances. This is in anticipation that their deliberations will eventually lead create the factors that will enable them to be in a position to proceed to the formality of selling issues.

However, considering this situation within the context of the normative pillar highlights the fact that despite their courageous endeavours middle managers are not likely to be able to reach this position.

The activities of middle managers in contemplating resolving cultural differences and devising a common discourse has synergies with previous literature on how middle managers craft strategic issues to associate with organizing values (Sonenshein, 2006). However, my study would suggest that the normative differences that exist between funding priorities between local authorities and healthcare agencies override these aspirations.

The activities of middle managers within my study supports previous research that identifies them as being closer to external executives than their internal top tier executives. This advantageous position would appear to provide them with the potential to be more effective in engaging in discussions on micro-level activities associated with selling issues related to strategic change (Rouleau, 2005). There are also synergies with the activities of middle managers in developing a language enabling them to be effective change-agents (Sonenshein, 2012). However, my study would suggest that these activities are likely to be frustrated by a clash of values existing between organizations that are competing for funding. This provides

an explanation as to the amount of preparatory work that middle managers within my study are currently preoccupied with in favour of proactively engaging in issue-selling. This also explains why middle managers are waiting for the right time to engage in this activity, which is also contingent on their desire to develop a common discourse for engagement.

Previous literature has highlighted the factors preventing proactive behaviour and its linkages to how proceeding to issue-selling is contingent on the risks associated with when would be the best time for putting ideas into practice (Baer, 2012; Kish-Gephert et al., 2009; Mair and Thurner, 2008; Morrison, 2011). My study sought to explore the underlying factors to explain why middle managers were immersed in precursory activities and also to identify any aspects of activity that indicated their intention to be more proactive. Considering these factors within the normative pillar provides clarification that middle managers perceive that the clash in values between both organizations would be too significant for them to embark on issue-selling.

The antecedents of middle managers towards deciding which situations would represent their best interests when deciding to sell issues have associations with paying attention to the characteristics of both the context and the target when assessing the favourability for framing and embarking on this activity (Dutton et al., 1997; Hoon, 2007; Rouleau, 2005). My study provides a contribution to this research in highlighting how middle managers are engaged in precursory activities because of the complexities of securing engagement with external executives. In considering this literature within the context of the normative values of housing

combined with social services and healthcare agencies it is possible to explain why there is little activity to secure effective opportunities to discuss the shifting of funding from healthcare.

The strategic championing role of middle managers in going beyond their expected responsibilities in order to sell issues has been highlighted by Mantere (2005). This study also identifies that adapting to the repetitive practices within their organization creates a tension that either encourages or discourages them to be strategic champions. Considering activities within the normative pillar provides a fresh perspective as to the significance of a clash in values. Such a clash between both organizations would make the best intentions of middle managers to try and achieve success to be virtually impossible.

The utilization of institutional work provides an explanation as to why there is a lack of success in securing the transfer of funding from healthcare to support home adaptations. This can be explained by the fact that this is not solely contingent on work influencing structures or routines. Instead, this challenge involves an attempt to deliver issues constituting attempts to change the normative institutional pillar of an organization. This provides an explanation as to why middle managers' attempts to leverage additional funding from health agencies are extremely difficult. When viewed from this perspective the best efforts of the middle managers within my study are continuously impeded by the overriding influence of the conflicting principles and standards inherent between different organizations.

8.5 Conclusion

Institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2011, 2009; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) is an effective lens for exploring the purposeful way middle managers within my study engage in issue-selling. This is observed as taking place upwardly towards internal top tier executives. In particular, success is achieved through the institutional work of policing, enabling work and embedding and routinising (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Precursory activities are observed to be taking place when middle managers engage in issue-selling outwardly towards external executives in healthcare agencies. Previous studies have identified the important role that middle managers play in contributing to corporate strategic decisions through the activity of issue-selling. Issue-selling involves the middle managers in my study to purposefully provide vital information (Dutton et al., 1997; Dutton and Ashford, 1993; Floyd and Lane, 2000; Hoon, 2007).

Institutional work and issue-selling, therefore, provide a greater understanding of the strategic activities of middle managers. The main focus of my study explores the formal process of issue-selling. This activity has synergies with previous research activities associated with ‘reading the winds’ (Dutton et al., 1997). This defines the efforts of middle managers taking a fluid and dynamic read of the context prior to issue-selling (Barnett, 2008; Dutton et al., 2001, 1997; Marginson, 2002; Liang et al., 2012; Ling et al., 2005; Miliken et al., 2003; Morrison, 2006; Wooldridge et al., 2008). My study involves an exploration into the fine-grained activities of the

antecedents that are taking place prior to proceeding to the formal processes of issue-selling. This has provided the opportunity to examine an area of activity relating to institutional work and issue-selling that has previously received very little attention in previous research activities. These activities are also given more credence when set within the context of regulatory, cultural-cognitive and normative regulatory pillars (Scott, 2001; Zietsma and McKnight, 2009).

Within the context of institutional work the successful streamlining of service-delivery is not just contingent on effectively working within the organizational structure. Instead it involves delivering issues that accord with a common discourse of reacting to cuts within the regulatory institutional pillar. Therefore, it enables the deployment of concepts that accord with the priorities of corporate and political executives. These factors enable middle managers to influence and promote the concept of streamlining-steps taken to deliver home adaptations.

The utilization of institutional work provides an explanation on the partial success for integrating service-delivery across all of the local authorities within the county. This activity is not just contingent on satisfying objectives within the organizational structure but also embraces the challenges of selling issues within the cultural-cognitive pillar. This identifies the difficulties involved in achieving a successful outcome within the overlapping power structures of individual local authorities. Purposeful activities by middle managers to address this challenge have helped to alleviate difficulties associated with the language of this institutional pillar. Their activities have also concentrated on selling integrating service-delivery across

neighbouring local authorities on the basis that this is the best thing to do in the circumstances. This is useful in identifying the challenges of working in the cultural-cognitive pillar and in providing an explanation as to how the application of institutional work identifies why this activity characterises partial success. In particular, it can be explained through the institutional work activities of ‘advocacy’, ‘defining’ and ‘constructing identities (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006)

There is a lack of success in securing the transfer of funding from healthcare to support home adaptations. This is despite the strong argument that the timely installation of home adaptations will reduce costs for external health agencies. The utilization of institutional work provides an explanation as to why the activities of middle managers are not solely contingent on work that can influence structures or routines. Instead, the challenge of delivering issues within this context represents attempts to change the normative institutional pillar of an organization. This provides an explanation on the complexities of issue-selling, in circumstances which are extremely difficult. Within this perspective efforts of middle managers within my study are frustrated by issues associated with conflicting principles and standards inherent in the conflicting discourses of organizations. In particular, their lack of success is attributable to enacting the complexities of institutional work associated with ‘changing normative associations’, and ‘constructing normative networks’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). This activity is made all the more complex by the ability for powerful actors to maintain institutions (Currie et al., 2012; Dacin et al., 2010; Lok and de Rond, 2013; Micelotta and Washington, 2013).

Chapter 9 –Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has sought to demonstrate how issue-selling can be conceived through the lens of institutional work. In carrying out such work managers can act on the regulatory pillar and in doing so can mobilise common concepts relating to service-improvement to exert influence and promote their priorities. The challenge of trying to work on the cultural-cognitive pillar is difficult where there are overlapping sets of authority and jurisdictional claim. Finally, when it comes to trying to shift budgets from healthcare across to social services, to improve and adapt homes, this kind of institutional work is almost impossible. Rather than seeing this as lacking a common discourse, the language of institutional pillars is helpful because this can be understood as the challenge of working on the normative pillar, and seen in this light this kind of work is frustrated by a clash of values. In concluding this thesis consideration is given to the contributions to the literature that my study has extended. Attention is then focused on how the key findings could be applied to practical policy implications. Recommendations are then made on how the findings from this thesis could contribute to a future research agenda together with an assessment of the limitations of this study.

9.2 Contribution to Academic Literature

The research question in this thesis seeks to address the practices that middle

managers use to accomplish institutional work upwards and outwards. This is subsequently broken down into sub-questions that are associated with how middle managers champion and sell issues internally and externally and whether there are any contingency factors that influence this activity. This emanates from the literature that is identified with defining the involvement of middle managers in the activities of championing (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992) and issue-selling (Dutton and Ashford, 1993). Attention particularly focused on the subsequent literature that has been associated with likening the factors for evaluating and gauging the favourability for issue-selling to the activity of 'reading the winds' (Dutton et al., 1997). The contributions identified in this thesis, therefore, represent an extension of the theoretical concepts that have subsequently emanated from these studies.

This thesis identifies the importance of the purposeful activities of middle managers as they continuously produce evidence that can support their involvement in issue-selling. This finding contributes to earlier research that has identified middle managers as playing a pivotal role in mobilising resources around new ideas (Dutton et al., 1997). More recent research has also identified the contribution of middle managers in providing information that supports their participation in management control systems introduced by top executives (Marginson, 2002). My thesis provides an additional contribution to the activity performed by middle managers in producing confirmation of performance achievements. In providing information that supports what is being achieved this is defined as a proactive activity. The production of evidence is integral to enabling middle managers to provide sufficient justification on verification of their progress.

Within this thesis it is identified that the strategic priorities formally identified as areas requiring immediate attention by top executives cause middle managers to sell issues that endorse how they are meeting these requirements. This activity contributes to earlier literature that highlights how issue-selling provides the opportunity for middle managers to draw attention to their achievements (Dutton et al., 1997). Subsequent literature also identifies how issues with a likelihood of being received favourably are an important motivator for middle managers to engage in this activity (De Clerq et al., 2011). An additional contribution within this thesis identifies how middle managers take proactive measures to tailor their messages to specifically draw attention to their activities and how they are contributing to corporate priorities.

Middle managers are also observed to be exploiting opportunities that enable them to share ideas with top executives. This provides a forum for demonstrating how they are providing a contribution to the strategic agenda. Previous research identifying how middle managers sell options through value-creating opportunities (Barnett, 2008) enabling them to be effective change-agents (Sonenshein, 2012) supports this finding. However, the findings within this thesis provide a practical demonstration of middle managers proactively seeking regular opportunities outside of formal procedures to ensure that their activities continue to be supported. The activity of creating opportunities for sharing ideas with top tier executives also provides a further contribution to studies identifying the importance of middle managers in meeting targets set by organizational controls (Floyd and Lane, 2000). The

contribution of middle managers to strategic planning (Andersen, 2004) is identified within this thesis as being enhanced through the arrangement of regular briefing sessions. Furthermore, the convening of such meetings serves to improve the chances of securing buy-in when competing with other middle managers for scarce resources (Raes et al., 2011).

The use of formal meetings to engage in strategic conversations has previously been highlighted by Hoon (2007) whose study extends the concept of paying particular attention to the target (Dutton et al., 1997) when issue-selling. This thesis provides an additional contribution to this finding by identifying how middle managers deal with the complexities of this pursuit. In particular, evidence of different tactics being adopted is provided which highlights how such conversations vary according to the particular circumstances associated with where issue-selling is taking place.

The impact of economic pressures that cause middle managers to be more proactive in issue-selling has been well-documented in previous studies (Ahearne et al., 2014; Barnett, 2008; Dutton et al., 1997; Piderit, 2000). My thesis provides an additional contribution to this literature. It identifies that economic pressures will cause a strategic decision to be made by top executives to urge service areas to reduce costs. In responding to this decision middle managers will be proactive in both providing a response to this requirement and in ensuring that they arrange opportunities that can demonstrate evidence of their achievements as a purposeful response to this challenge.

Previous academic literature identifies the extent to which middle managers are able to judge whether conditions are likely to be favourable or unfavourable prior to selling issues (Dutton et al., 1997). This concept has subsequently been used to explore how decisions to promote ideas arise through formal and informal channels (Howell and Bois, 2004) together with how middle managers are encouraged by selling issues that can be seen to add value (Barnett, 2008). Their success as change-agents has also been associated with a conducive environment for selling issues and the effectiveness of their associations with stakeholders (Chen et al., 2014). My thesis extends these concepts by also defining that in such circumstances middle managers are often forced to choose the best course of action based upon the prevailing situation that they find themselves operating in.

The conditions that dictate whether or not middle managers will engage in issue-selling have been identified as being influenced by the likely reception that these will receive from top executives (Dutton et al., 1997). Subsequent studies have extended this finding to define a reluctance to sell issues where actors feel that these will be negatively received (Miliken et al., 2003). In turn other research has concentrated on the implications of a favourable reception (Ling et al., 2005). The likelihood of a successful outcome has also been associated with the efforts made by middle managers to facilitate this (Mantere, 2005). An example of a proactive activity involves engaging in strategic conversations (Hoon, 2007). My thesis extends the literature by identifying how middle managers develop a very fine-tuned approach to issue-selling. This has its foundations in being proactive in developing an effective

relationship with top tier executives. The importance of the effort that is put into maintaining this relationship is also crucial to successful issue-selling.

In extending this study to consider how middle managers operate outwards in selling issues within the external environment it is evident that the activity is much more constrained. This finding has synergies with literature exploring the factors that might curtail this activity. Inactivity in selling issues has previously been identified with the sensitivities of meeting socially acceptable behaviour (Miliken et al., 2003); this has also been extended to consider the risks of reputational harm (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). There are also factors associated with actors being apprehensive in unfamiliar situations (Detert and Trevino, 2010). My thesis extends this literature by closely focusing on the impact that middle managers encounter when they enter into different organizational cultures. This situation is further exacerbated within the context of attempting to convene conversations on issue-selling that are associated with trying to leverage money from one public-sector agency to another.

The apprehension of middle managers in selling issues has previously been identified in research defining environments where there is no backing or chain of command which have been associated with 'norm violation' (Dutton et al., 1997). These circumstances cause a disinclination to engage in issue-selling and is a concept that has been further considered in later studies (Crant, 2000; Dutton et al., 2001; Howard-Grenville, 2007). In particular, Morrison (2011) has highlighted how issue-selling is influenced by the supportiveness or un-supportiveness of the organization. My thesis provides an additional contribution to this literature in

identifying the antecedents that take place in response to adverse conditions. This identifies how a large amount of effort is devoted to contemplating how best to face challenges where the likelihood of achieving any success is likely to be very limited. This also extends previous research by providing an additional insight into the finding that middle managers attempt to craft strategic issues to associate with an organizations values (Sonenshein, 2006).

The application of institutional work as a lens for exploring the strategic practices of middle managers provides further contribution to institutional theory. The identification of how the institutional work of middle managers is underpinned by the institutional pillars that they are operating within provides a basis for extending the literature. Within this context the thesis provides a fresh insight into the application of the typologies of institutional work that have been conceived by Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006 and have subsequently been applied to academic research studies (Currie et al., 2012; Paroutis and Heracleous, 2013). Firstly, institutional work associated with ‘enabling work’, ‘policing’ and ‘embedding and routinising’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006:230) is observed as taking place within the regulatory pillar and these activities are all associated with institutional maintenance. Secondly, cultural-cognitive activities are associated with institutional work that is concerned with ‘advocacy’, ‘defining’ and ‘constructing identities’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006: 221) and these activities are associated with creating institutions. Thirdly, the normative pillar identifies activities associated with the institutional work of ‘changing normative associations’ and ‘constructing normative networks’ (Lawrence and Suddaby: 2006:221) which are again associated with creating institutions. These findings, therefore, provide a theoretical contribution to

the application of institutional work to a practical study that identifies how the purposeful activities of activities of actors are mobilised to effect change within the institutional pillars.

Antecedents to institutional work are identified as preparatory activities taking place prior to the purposeful behaviour identified in institutional work. Issue-selling in this context focuses on precursory activities that tackle the conflicting discourses existing between different organizations. Attempts by middle managers to undertake purposeful activities that are a key feature of institutional work are, therefore, curtailed and instead middle managers are in a prolonged state of contemplating how to tackle issue-selling. This identification of antecedents to institutional work is an area of activity that has received very limited attention in previous academic literature. It provides the opportunity to consider the nature of the precursory activities that middle managers are involved in before proceeding to institutional work. It also defines how institutional work involving ‘changing normative associations’ and ‘constructing normative networks’ are very complex activities and, as such, will need to be enacted over a far longer timescale than other forms of institutional work.

9.3 Practical Policy Implications

The challenge of improving or sustaining services within a climate of budgetary reductions has been a common feature of public-sector service-delivery within the UK over recent years. My study has highlighted the complexities of what on the

surface appears to be a straightforward response to the common expectations placed on middle managers to respond to this. Activities commonly include enacting a service-redesign or modifying service-delivery as a reaction to cuts in funding within their service area. By focusing on the purposeful institutional work of middle managers within the regulatory, cultural-cognitive and normative institutional pillars a practical explanation is provided as to why some aspects of managerial work are relatively easy to achieve whereas others are far more difficult.

Conceiving the complexities of issue-selling within the three institutional pillars would, therefore, greatly assist more managers within the public-sector to make an assessment of their likelihood of success. Attempts to modify services in response to the expectation of delivering more for less can be measured against the institutional pillar that these endeavours fall into. In particular, those activities identified within the regulatory pillar of the organization would be identified as proceeding on the basis that issue-selling should be a straightforward activity. Processes identified as falling within the cultural-cognitive pillar, such as selling an issue on the basis that it was the best course of action to take within a given situation, would be identified as requiring more work - including building up evidence and developing trusted relationships upwardly. Similarly the likelihood that activities within the normative pillar highlight a great risk of failure also needs to be acknowledged. The necessity for middle managers to engage the support of the corporate and political executives at an early stage should also be enacted. Work to effect successful issue-selling within the normative pillar could also practically applied to the policy implications for ongoing public-sector initiatives. This also accords with the findings from leading academics:

Research interests in public performance at the individual, organization and systems levels seem set to continue, alongside studies of cross boundary and collaborative management and further analysis of experience, values and motivations of public-sector employees (Ashworth, Ferlie, Hammerschmid, Moon and Reay, 2013:S13)

These are worthy for consideration within the following contemporary public-sector policy issues within the UK.

The Department of Health (DOH) white paper ‘Caring for our future: reforming care and support’ (HM Government 2012), sets out a vision for a reformed care and support systems proposing a focus on people’s wellbeing and support for them to stay independent for as long as possible through an integration of different services. Proposals to reform the care and support system under the requirements of this legislation will invariably rely on different organizations within local government and public healthcare coming together to deliver this. The findings from my study highlight the complexities of the languages of institutional pillars and the particular challenges of working in the normative pillar. This will require policies to identify measures that can address the likely clash of values between different organizations, which will override purposeful attempts to sell issues across public-sector organizations.

The Government strategy for housing, “Laying the Foundations”, (HM Government, 2011) emphasizes a requirement for the local provision of housing-related services placing the obligations on partner agencies such as regional local authorities to develop this initiative. As this involves the integration of different local authorities working together to deliver this initiative the cultural-cognitive processes that are likely to occur within issue-selling would greatly benefit from operating with an awareness that the competing discourses from each individual local authority will need to be considered. This activity will be greatly assisted by enacting the necessary interventions to achieve this objective.

The Care Act (HM Government, 2014) encourages a greater integration of services across health agencies within the public-sector in the United Kingdom. Additionally the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published guidance on ‘excess winter deaths and morbidity and the health risks associated with cold homes’ (HM Government, 2015). Since the establishment of the ‘Better Care Fund’ the funding for disabled facilities grants traditionally provided directly to district councils with responsibility for housing services has been devolved to county council’s. As the duty to provide adaptations remains with the district councils there will be a requirement for middle managers to make representations as to why their service area should be allocated a proportion of this funding. Policies that pay attention to the language of institutional pillars will help to clarify areas requiring middle managers to work on competing discourses. Competing discourses can be identified in the cultural-cognitive pillar and areas requiring the complexity of

dealing with conflicting discourses of public-sector organizations bidding for funding will fall within the normative pillar.

In recent years every local authority has had a significant proportion of its national funding cut. The requirement for middle managers within service areas to enact service-redesigns and modify service-delivery in response to this is becoming an integral component of their responsibilities. Furthermore, these deep cuts are set to continue during the jurisdiction of the recently-elected government. Accordingly, it is extremely likely that services will not sustain their viability without options for delivering these through integration and shared delivery across public-sector organizations. This is also evidenced by government initiatives such as pooling budgets. As such, policies that pay attention to the language of institutional pillars are an effective way of enabling middle managers to be more effective in enacting issue-selling within a public-sector environment of continued austerity.

9.4 Research Agenda

As my results utilize institutional work as a lens for observing the issue-selling of middle managers this paves the way for future empirical studies using this as methodology to investigate purposeful activities related to selling strategic initiatives. The language of institutional pillars has proved to be effective in providing an explanation of the behaviours of middle managers when embarking on issue-selling. This also provides an explanation on the environmental factors

influencing the success or failure of this activity. A broader application of this concept within the context of issue-selling would provide more evidence as to the factors governing successful outcomes.

The regularity pillar within my study represents middle managers operating within a local authority environment. As such they operate within the formalities of accountability to an internal executive managements team; local politicians through formal committee meetings and are closely supervised by their corporate executives. This presents an extremely structuralized perspective of organizational culture and the activities of issue-selling are likely to be influenced by the requirements of operating in such an intensely-regulated environment. In particular, there is the inherent requirement to satisfy the requirements of the customer within a closely scrutinized environment in addition to presenting issues within the formalized structure of meetings attended by corporate and political executives. Further research could, therefore, explore activities within the regulatory pillar through a more commercialized environment. This would provide the opportunity to analyse the strategic activities whose focus is less on having to satisfy the machinations of political and public accountability and more towards the maximization of profit. Research into this area of activity would provide a good indication on the extent to which precursory activities are governed by the requirements of accountability within an organizational structure.

The cultural-cognitive activities explored within my study are also governed by the competing discourses of highly regulated organizations. Studying this activity

within another sector would be useful to establish the extent to which the requirement to build up relationships and develop trusted relationships was necessary. Similarly, more research could be undertaken into middle managers selling issues across different organizations. This could serve to identify whether normative factors representing conflicting discourses is as prevalent.

This approach could also be employed into future studies into public-sector activities. In particular, leading academics have highlighted the importance that current impact that austerity is having on public-sector innovation (Ashworth et al., 2013). However, they also assert, ... 'public management research frequently tells a story of stability, resilience and enduring public-sector values' (Ashworth et al., 2013:S12). My thesis contributes to current activities that reflect this determination in highlighting the proactive endeavours of middle managers as they continue to persevere in the face of adversity.

9.5 Limitations

As the results from my study are based on the activities of middle managers from a limited sample comprising one county within the UK these results cannot be regarded as a completely indicative representation. This study also constitutes a segment of an ongoing activity that has been enacted over a number of years. A longitudinal study would have provided more conclusive results and provided the

opportunity to gauge whether or not any changes to political administrations both locally and nationally would have any impact on the activities of middle managers.

My findings are gleaned from in-depth interviews with a number of internal and external informants, observations at meetings and a number of supporting documents. The lens of institutional work has also provided the focus for specifically concentrating on the purposeful activities of middle managers. This evidence has been sufficient to identify practices through language within the three institutional pillars. Although this study has utilized a number of informants, observations and documents there are other explanations that could have been used. In particular, while access was relatively easy to obtain within local authorities it has been far more difficult to gain access to individuals in external organizations and political executives. This is mainly attributable to the fact that executives from these organizations did not have the same ownership of this collaboratively funded research activity.

The middle managers within my study covered a broad spectrum ranging from heads of housing departments within district councils, heads of service in social care and health and general managers within housing and adult social services with specific areas of responsibility. As such there will be a degree of variance on the responses received towards specific questions depending on the position of managers within the hierarchy of the local authority. An additional factor for consideration is that this study was conducted in a two-tier arrangement for local administration across the county. The majority of the local authorities represented are the smaller district

councils with the county council representing a larger geographical area and a much larger number of employees. This means that there is likely to be variances in responses depending on which local authority the individual actor is working for. Issue-selling is also conceptualized on the basis of an individual's own perception. Therefore, interviewees have given responses to questions based upon their own particular frame of reference and these will have variance depending upon their span of responsibility and the size of their local authority.

My analysis was restricted to home adaptations delivered by local authority housing and social services functions. Therefore, findings might produce different results if a similar approach was applied to other parts of the public-sector. In particular, as activities are undertaken in a two-tier region social care and health activities fall within the jurisdiction of the county council and housing services fall within the authority of five district councils. Results are, therefore, likely to vary if a comparison was drawn with a unitary authority where both service areas fell within the control of the same local authority.

Results to semi-structured interviews provided by my informants were set within the context of a confidential interview with a PhD researcher and the responses provided could be more frank and open than the responses that would be provided to corporate or political executives. However, these answers might also be more guarded than those that would be divulged to colleagues in a social context or towards close family members. Furthermore, observations of activities of middle managers at

project team meetings might have been influenced by the presence of a PhD researcher observing their activities.

9.6 Conclusion

Institutions have been identified in previous research as constituting structures of organizational change and service-redesign representing routines, mental models and established ways of doing things. The concept of institutional work identifies the purposeful activities that ‘create, maintain and disrupt organizations’ (Lawrence and Suddaby: 2006:215). This concept has proved to be particularly useful for examining the different aspects to managerial work associated with attempts to address the deep-rooted challenges arising from budgetary and other pressures. In particular, it has enabled the identification of the subtle distinctions of managerial influencing strategies revealing where these have been more and less likely to succeed. This activity has benefited from the utilization of the three institutional pillars: regulatory, cultural-cognitive and normative (Scott, 2001; Zietsma and McKnight, 2009) that underpin institutional work. Some aspects of managerial work, in terms of achieving influence and selling issues, have been easier to achieve within this setting whereas others have proved to be more difficult, or virtually impossible.

Work associated with activities that accord with the strategic priorities of the organization is identified as the most straightforward to achieve because this accords with the common discourse of upper-tier executives. In undertaking the activity of issue-selling (Dutton and Ashford, 1993) middle managers can act on the regulatory

pillar and in doing so are able to utilize common concepts that enable them to exert influence and promote their priorities. Institutional work within the regulatory pillar, therefore, demonstrates how issue-selling can be successfully achieved through shared discourse that leads to a successful outcome. The language of institutional pillars provides an explanation to this success in identifying the shared discourse within the regulatory pillar that leads to straightforward achievements. Institutional work also emphasizes the importance of the purposeful activities of middle managers in support of issue-selling. The utilization of institutional work, therefore, provides a contribution to previous literature on successful issue-selling. In particular, this identifies that it is not just contingent on effectively working within the organizational structure. Instead delivering issues that accord with the common discourse within the regulatory pillar enables the deployment of concepts that enable the successful selling of ideas upwardly.

The challenge of working on the cultural-cognitive pillar identifies issue-selling to be more difficult for middle managers because this takes place in an environment where there are competing discourses. The reason why success is only partial is because middle managers are involved with the challenge of selling what they conceive of as the right thing to do. This is in contrast to the discourse enshrined in the strategic priorities of the organization that are reflected in the regulatory pillar. Promoting issues that fall outside of the authority and jurisdictional claim of the organization, therefore, require middle managers to be purposeful in exerting influence upwardly in an attempt to shift this opinion. These attempts are contingent on their ability to sell this issue upwardly to executives in competing with the discourses associated with the strategic priorities for the organization. A means of

addressing this situation sees middle managers enacting a series of interventions in order to maximize their likelihood of achieving a successful outcome. This activity reveals how partial success in addressing the challenge of issue-selling within competing discourse can be achieved. This activity is based upon issue-selling using the argument that it is the best course of action to take within a specific set of circumstances. The language of institutional pillars is, therefore, helpful in identifying the challenges that middle managers face when working to address competing discourses within the cultural-cognitive pillar.

The challenge of issue-selling within the normative pillar is highlighted by the fact this activity is virtually impossible to execute effectively. The language of institutional pillars identifies this as the challenge of working in the normative pillar. Within this context purposeful attempts to sell issues are often frustrated by a far greater overriding factor. This concerns the clash of values that almost invariably exist between different organizations. The utilization of institutional work provides an explanation as to why the activities of middle managers are not solely contingent on work that can influence structures or routines. Instead, the challenge of delivering issues within this context represents attempts to change the normative institutional pillar of an organization. This provides an explanation as to why it is so difficult to sell issues within this context and why the best efforts of middle managers are frustrated by opposing principles and standards that are inherent in the conflicting discourses of organizations.

Antecedents to institutional work are identified as preparatory activities taking place prior to the purposeful behaviour identified in institutional work. Issue-selling in this context focuses on precursory activities to tackle the conflicting discourses existing between different organizations. Attempts by middle managers to undertake purposeful activities that are a key feature of institutional work are, therefore, curtailed and instead middle managers are involved in a prolonged state of contemplating how to tackle issue-selling. This identification of antecedents to institutional work is an area of activity that has received very limited attention in previous academic literature. It provides the opportunity to consider the nature of the precursory activities that middle managers are involved in before proceeding to institutional work.

Exploring the institutional work of actors through the sustained engagement within a setting over time has provided an insight into how middle managers engage in issue-selling. What, from a distance, appear to be activities involving a common challenge of improving or sustaining services within a climate of budgetary reductions actually reveals different kinds of managerial work, with different outcomes. Institutional work and issue-selling, therefore, provide a greater understanding of the strategic activities of middle managers. These activities are also given more credence when set within the context of regulatory, cultural-cognitive and normative institutional pillars.

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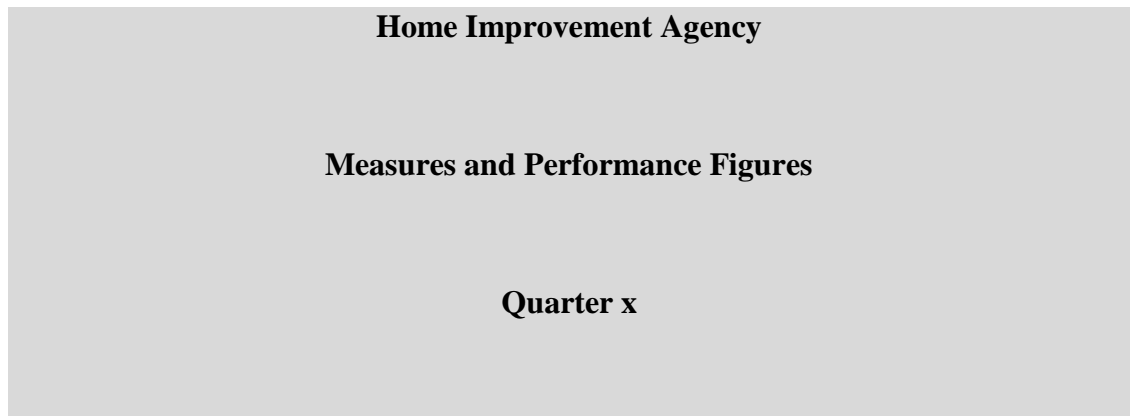
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Appendix A

Example of performance report



The quarter one performance report for is reporting on the service performance from xxxx to the xxxx.

Report Summary

1. Customer Outcomes

The performance reporting on DFG has been split into works completed in a quarter

(I.e. building works), and DFG completion (equipment and customer record closure). There have been xx DFG adaptations completed with only xx of these being closed completely.

All six key themes have scored over xx% but Respect and Dignity remains the lowest score in all three quarters

2. Value

The aggregated average across the x areas is £xxxxxxx, which is considerably lowering than pre-experiment and previous averages.

3. Flow

The impact of changing to the new IT system has been substantial with training and familiarisation being necessary and a staged approach to its use.

There are two areas that can be improved and reduce the overall time by xxx days

1. from telephone assessment to face to face visit – currently xx days
2. Contact with contractor to receiving quotation – currently xx days

4. Pull – customer survey

Overall the majority of customers considered contractors to be performing at a good level or above.

5. Perfection

Work has been undertaken to ensure all staff are compliant with the mandatory and statutory training requirements.

Introduction

The service continues to operate across Local authorities 1, 2 and 3 for xxxx-xx. The workforce is slowly stabilising and this will with time will assist with the other changes in process in particular IT systems contribute to available capacity to address the waiting list that existed at the end of the xxxx-xx financial year of xxx customers.

1. Customer

1.1 Outcomes Framework

	Total number of DFG's Approved within quarter	Total number of DFG's Works Completed within quarter	Total number of DFG's Completed within quarter	Achieved at least 2 out of the 3 outcome themes of completed cases	Achieved at least 5 out of the 10 potential outcomes of completed cases	Average Outcome achievement per Adaptation
Q1	Xx	Xx	xx	Xx	xx	Xx

The performance reporting on DFG has been split into works completed in a quarter (i.e. building works) which is xx for this quarter. The second figure is related to all work including equipment and closure of the customer record which is only xx.

There remains an average of around xx customer outcomes for each completed adaptation consistent with the previous year.

1.2 Goals

Number of Customers – all cases completed in quarter	Number of goals set minimum of 1 per person.	Number of Goals achieved or exceeded
xxx of which xx were completed DFG's.	xxx	Yes xx Yes and More x

The recording of goals by practitioners is poor using the new IT system. Further staff training will take place within xxxx concerning the recording of goals.

1.3 Customer Survey

The target number of surveys to be completed per quarter is based on a percentage of the total number of enquiries within each area are:

- Local authority 1 xx
- Local authority 2 xx
- Local authority 3 xx

The survey is not solely related to Disabled Facilities Grant but all interventions provided to the customer.

There are x key themes to the customer survey which are:

- **Respect and Dignity**
- **Communication**
- **Responsiveness**
- **Reliability**
- **Contractors**
- **Overall experience**

Within each category there are a number of questions that customers are asked to rate from x to x with a score of x being a good service.

This is the third time the customer survey has been completed for the quarterly performance reports and this will provide a good benchmark for moving forward.

For Quarter x there were in total xx customer surveys completed of which xx surveys in local authority 1 area, xx for local authority 2 area and xx for local authority 3 area.

The table below shows the overall score for each key theme

KEY THEME	Score of x or above as a total percentage Q1
Respect and Dignity	Xx
Communication	Xx
Responsiveness	Xx
Reliability	Xx
Contractors	Xx
Overall Experience	Xx

Table 1: Customer Survey Outcomes across the 6 themes

All six key themes have scored over xx% but Respect and Dignity remains the lowest score in all three quarters. The weak areas were:

- How much do you feel you were able to influence the recommendations and choices?
- To what extent do you feel you were offered opportunities to help yourself and or carers to addressing your problems?

The positive feedback from the customers included:

- Signposted by xxxxx Housing very pleased thank you.
- amazing service , brilliant ,very pleased
- very pleased, all staff were polite and contractors pleasant

There are some customer comments that the service can learn from and take action:

- Lack of communication from initial contact

- When ramp was done they took all my plants away and I don't know where they have gone. I don't like answering silly questions.
- Lack of communication from initial contact

Only xx% of the required customer surveys were conducted and this can be attributed to the IT system change that took place during the first quarter, and the need to develop the reporting and monitoring procedures.

2. Value

2.1 Average Cost of an Adaptation

The average cost of adaptations under the old system was £xxxx within local authority 1 and local authority 2. The average cost within the Service during xxxx/xx was £xxxx

Quarter 1
Local authority 1 £xxxx (xx cases)
Local authority 2 £xxxx (xxcases)
Local authority 3 £xxxx (xx cases)

The aggregated average across the 3 areas is £xxxx, which is considerably lowering than pre-experiment and previous averages. Obviously the average is very dependent on the type of adaptations being approved. These are actual costs and have not been adjusted to take in to account inflation.

2.2 Demand

	Q4 xxxx-xx	Q 1 xxxx-xx	Average Per Month	Average Per Working Day
Total number of enquiries in period	Xxx	Xxx	xx	Xx
Total number of Telephone Assessments in period	Xxx	Xxx	Xx	Xx
Total enquiries on Intake list with no telephone assessment at period end	xx	xx	N/A	N/A
Total number on list waiting for face to face visit at period end	Xxx	Xx	N/A	N/A
Total number that had face to face visit at period end	xx	Xx	Xx	X
Total number closed within period	Xxx	Xxx	xx	X
Number of cases closed within period that had received a visit	xxx	Xx	xx	Xx

Work has continued to implement the new IT system within the service and confidence in the use of the system has increased as the team become more familiar with the new software system. The impact of changing to the new IT system has been substantial with training and familiarisation being necessary and a staged approach to its use. Many exiting cases were transferred on to the new system to

ensure that data was in one place to support the provision of performance data. The impact of the reduction of staff available has been felt across the service.

There was an increase on the previous year number of enquiries and telephone assessments. The front end of the system i.e. enquiries and telephone assessments is performing well with only xx people awaiting a face to face assessment at the end of the period (average during xxxx/xx was x). Unfortunately, at the end of the quarter the number of people waiting for a face to face assessment has increased to xxx. The team did conduct xxx face to face assessments during the quarter.

During the first quarter the service continued to operate with a reduced number of staff which included xx FTE Housing Assessment Officers and xx FTE Occupational Therapist, which would have reduced capacity by approx xx days per week. Due to some cover being provided we were able to limit the impact to xx FTE HOA being absent. From July the OT post has been successfully recruited too on a temporary basis to cover the career break. The HOA team will remain at xx posts below capacity.

In addition during Qx the Assessment Co-ordinator that was inputting data on to the Care First system found alternative employment and a suitable alternative arrangement has not been identified. The impact of this is being felt within the team by employees who must amend Care First for non employees.

Interventions	Number
DFG (private)	Xx
Council adaptation assessments local authority 1	Xx
Council adaptation assessments local authority 2	Xx
Council adaptation assessments local authority 3	Xx
Community Equipment	Xx
Self-funding	Xx
Benefits check	Xx

Interventions	Number
Housing advice	Xx
Home safety	Xx
Council repairs	xx
Advice & Information	Xx
Energy efficiency	Xx
Council Fast Track	Xx
Personalisation	Xx
Other	Xx
Total	xxx

The IT systems ability to record interventions had not been adequately trained out and utilised during the xx quarter so the recording is low. The data integrity will improve as the system becomes better utilised as it is designed to capture all the interventions performed.

3 Flow

3.1 Dropout rate

Pre-experiment	xxxx/xx	xxxx/xx	<i>Qlxxxx</i>
<i>xx% County Average</i>	x%	x%	x% (x case)

Although the drop- out rate has increased it only related to one customer who cancelled after they chose not to have the more detailed assessment, and were subsequently informed that the landlady would fund a ramp to the front access and therefore the needs would be met by alternative means.

3.2 Hand Offs in Pathway

Pre- experiment	Q1 2014
Xx	Xx

There have been various changes within Q4 in the last year and Q1 including work to reconfigure and move to the xxxx system so once processes have re-stabilised a review of the number of steps within the pathway is required.

3.3 End to End Time and the 8 Key Stages

The End to End time for the DFG is the overall time from Initial contact with xxx or xxxx to completion of the adaptation works.

The data concerns Private DFG cases closed within the quarter.

Good Practice in Delivering Housing for Disabled People (DCLG)	Pre-experiment	xxxx/xx	xxxx/xx
High need – xx days Medium need – xxx Low need – xxx (Not FACS categories)	xxx Calendar days (county average)	xxx Calendar days	xxx Calendar days

Q1 2014/15
xxx Calendar days

The data concerns Private DFG cases closed within the quarter which is only a small percentage of the total work. The length of time has increased but it is still significantly less than pre-experiment.

There are 8 key stages in the pathway.

Stages	Inclusion Parameter	xxxxx – xxxx Mean Time
Enquiry to Telephone Assessment (all cases)	Initial Assessment within quarter	xx Days
Telephone Assessment to Face to Face Assessment (all cases)	Face to face assessment in quarter	xx Days
Face to Face Assessment to Contractor visit	Contractor visit in quarter	xx Days
Contractor visit to Quotation	Quotation received within quarter	xx Days
Quotation to DFG Approval	Approval within quarter	xx Days
DFG Approval to Start of Works	Works started in quarter	xx Days
Start of Works to Completion of works	Works completed within quarter	xx Days
	Sub Total	xxx days
Completion of works to Case Closure	Cases closed within quarter	Xx Days

There are two areas that can be improved and reduce the overall time by xxx days

1. From telephone assessment to face to face visit – currently xx days
2. Contact with contractor to receiving quotation – currently xx days

3.4 Cost of Pathway

This work is currently on hold.

4. Pull

4.1 Contractor Audit

The service supply chain is effectively the contractors that deliver the adaptations. Ensuring high quality performance from the contractors is important to the overall delivery and customer satisfaction.

From all the customers surveyed the following **percentages** were achieved during Quarter x from the xx customer surveys.

	Poor	Not Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Great
Polite and courteous	x	X	X	x	xx	xx
Cleanliness	x	X	X	x	x	Xx
Quality of work	X	X	X	xx	xx	xx
Timekeeping	x	X	X	x	xx	Xx
Choice of materials	X	X	X	x	x	xx

Overall the majority of customers considered contractors to be performing at a good level or above.

It is interesting that the customer, who rated the choice of materials as poor, received a xx foot modular ramp which would have been similar in construction to the following.

5. Perfection

5.1 Complaints & Compliments

There has been x formal complaint for the service received by the county

5.2 Compliance with Minimum Training Standards

Work has been undertaken to ensure all staff are compliant with the mandatory and statutory training requirements below:

- Adult Safeguarding
- Child Safeguarding
- Mental Capacity Act & Deprivation of Liberty
- Moving and Handling

Further work is being completed on defining what is statutory and mandatory and core competencies in terms of the roles within the team both from a legal and an operational delivery perspective. The outcome of this work will be included in the annual learning and development plans for each organization and assist with personal development reviews.

Appendix B

Example of meetings observation

Field note No	Example of meetings observation field notes	Regulatory(R), Normative (N), Cultural-cognitive (CC)
	Introduction and recap	
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions centred around delivering services within reduced budgets and sharing the vision for holistic county wide services. 	R CC
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was linked to delivering services within a peer reviewed lean systems approach. 	R
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The message to be delivered needed to exemplify what the service had been doing utilising messages that were intelligible across partners. 	CC
	Scope of the service – discussion to answer the questions:	
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A discussion centred around what should be contained within the service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now In the future It was also important to define what was out of scope 	R
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was currently being driven by Health and Wellbeing Strategy for funding streams. Messages to promote the service needed to concentrate on key areas such as elderly, vulnerable and disabled people – it was important not to lose focus on those areas. 	N
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A suggestion centred around the need to build something into the project that was robust to ensure future funding. This needed to decide where the project was going and who was in control of each area. Getting the core right was essential at this stage. 	N
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A starting point focused around mandatory services and then to decide to focus on one the delivery of one scheme. This needed to ensure resilience and bear in mind the functions will need to be future-proof. To be mindful during these difficult financial times not to set up a large agency that promises to provide too many things. 	CC
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Question. How do we identify core value and width of service within the wider arena of prevention and adaptations?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key is sustainability of the service. All agreed the need to identify the core services and 	CC
		N

Field note No	Example of meetings observation field notes	Regulatory(R), Normative (N), Cultural-cognitive (CC)
	<p>not offer too much. To think about funding/finances first to ensure not setting up services to fail in the future – so need to get some degree of sustainability into the project. When this scope was agreed then there would be the need to nail down funding streams (corporate funding):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting People funding stream – not large amounts of funding available - Better Care funding (BCF) – concerns regarding profile within this fund so will probably have to look at this in the future. o Adult Social Care funding stream need to make savings, so be aware that HIA adaptations would need to prove they have made savings. Also advised that Community Commissioners will look at protecting core services first, so HIA will need to be able to prove what it does in the core service area. o Adaptations are a small part of what districts had a legal responsibility for, and emphasised that other elements of the experiment are social care and focused on prevention. Would like to have discussions relating to housing and independent living, as this takes the project down a different route o From a legislation point of view – districts only have to assess people in relation to a Disabled Facilities Grant. 	N
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Question. What do we hope for in terms of benefits?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o – potential duties and power in Care Bill – ‘provision of services to promote wellbeing and re-ablement’. Request for funding needs to be evidence-based – advised using formulas. 	N
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q. Is it worth being honest when firming and building this specification – to enable sustainability?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just to sustain what is mandatory – will have to make a case and prove outcome. • Look at each element and test vulnerability, how funded, benefits to individuals and wider community. 	N
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q. Is this group the right board to agree this specification and make the case?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o – this is a health priority for the county – need to decide whether we can deliver these priorities. We can’t just assume that this is the correct 	N

Field note No	Example of meetings observation field notes	Regulatory(R), Normative (N), Cultural-cognitive (CC)
	<p>vehicle – we need to demonstrate this is the best route. We are in a good position as we have inside information to cost the model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ concerns were raised about not getting the ‘scope’ agreed yet. There was a need to decide what the project proposal was for the future. Also need to know what the project was aiming for. It appears this is more of a re-scoping exercise of deciding which direction to go. ● There was a need for getting out a strong message of what has been achieved, show scope for additions and future vision. ● It was confirmed that certain local authorities approach was to provide HIA adaptations in-house. Raised concerns as members won’t agree if the same benefits are proven in an outsourced company for less cost. Need to prove VfM and prove case financially and effectively. ○ Need to decide the vehicle for moving forward, what the service should look like and costs/benefits. ○ Need to define how we evidence base outcomes. Possibly do a matrix relating to funding and define whether mandatory, essential or desirable measures. Map each element out then look at it to agree whether core and whether it can be evidenced. All agreed the need to do a matrix. to obtain DFG research evidence. ○ BCF only has 1-year guaranteed funding; therefore there may be a degree of urgency. One MM was to send cabinet report s cabinet requesting an exemption from standing orders. This underlined the need to resolve the specification swiftly. 	<p>CC</p> <p>R</p> <p>N</p> <p>R</p> <p>R</p> <p>R</p> <p>R</p>
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The message was about keeping people out of institutional care but for commissioning the key was sustainability. There was a need for the clarity of core services. These were turbulent times with savings high on the agenda. Conversations needed to be about finance just then determine service specification 	R
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There were great financial challenges ahead with an ongoing legacy to care services. Outcomes that have focused on reducing waiting lists these are real achievements. But adult social care funding looked bleak. Line of £xxxx coming out. There was an uncertainty about how the HIA could make that kind of 	R

Field note No	Example of meetings observation field notes	Regulatory(R), Normative (N), Cultural-cognitive (CC)
	saving for adult social care. More clarity was needed to see where the work of the HIA had made a saving. There were also many other projects running with a proxy. The better care fund is for acute providers. Community commissioners were protecting social care. There were concerns as to whether anything was left over. In that context the HIA project had to be a lot sharper on what it did. It needed a mandatory focus.	N
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the health and well being board it was important to define what were the priorities. Hand off if the HIA could deliver. The assumption was that this is was best value. As outsiders there was a need to demonstrate this was the best vehicle. (competition from other sectors). 	N
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a suggestion that a scoping exercise needed to take place in order to bring the service forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are we adding to that which is not being done at the moment? I it is a hybrid. Evidence of core work and we also do this other work on the side. That is what we have set out to deliver There is loads of stuff you can charge for. xx% does not get financial assistance. Deliver core in order to get the extra work. 	N N R
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a requirement to have the next steps ready and be clear. It was agreed that the group had been really good at times and a redefined scope was in the detail to pitch for something. This would need skills required, a project specification and extras. 	N
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a need to keep talking about the better care fund but that was not why the HIA project had been established. Because the finance was coming from a number of different pools. This was key in terms of good business sense and there was a need to understand how much it was costing. 	
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The county was a commissioning council unless there was an evidence base and reasonableness not to put this out. Services were only kept in house where they could prove that this was the better thing to do. 	
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that all authorities had tough decisions to make and to understand costs because although there was a priority to outsource. Members needed to be kept aware of the benefits that the HIA provides. But winning hearts and minds was not enough although this could be delivered really well in house. But can the challenge of providing the best value was more difficult particularly 	

Field note No	Example of meetings observation field notes	Regulatory(R), Normative (N), Cultural-cognitive (CC)
<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>with a hole in the finances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The difficulty was that without having an input from health the HIA project was not going to be able to make any way forward. • But there was the situation where Health is not able to look at it until there is a clear story to present to them. • This came down to doing a selling job it came back down to that. • This was challenged with the requirement to bring a robust evaluation report. Providing more robust data that was broken down to its component parts and demonstrate where it adds value. • The core service was about having a good story to tell. However, the other bits were less easy to justify. The county needed to know what was able to influence the CCGs strategic priorities. 	
<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>Service specification – discussion on how the service should be run</p> <p>Discussions considered the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Delivery model • Office bases • Management • Staffing • IT • Governance – we represent our organizations. <p><i>Question. Is there anything we need to review relating to what works etc.?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating changes required the need to engage with various people to get even the minor things achieved as there was no direct chain of command and the HIA project team was unable to make decisions for other services also there was the difficulty of not having the knowledge of other organizations. • The conversation re focused on the future scope of the service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is an essential element? ○ What would be nice to have? If you have identified your core improvements. ○ Go away and map it out. Using the criteria is that core? ○ Can it deliver benefits? • The fundamentals were to get to one county wide service 	<p>R</p> <p>R</p> <p>R</p> <p>CC</p>

Appendix C

Interview Topic Guide 1

Preliminary semi-structured interviews (middle managers)

1. What do you feel the partnership has achieved so far?
2. What are its key objectives?
3. How can the partnership develop more integrated home improvement services?
4. What do you feel are the key challenges of working in a mixed economy of service providers?
5. What are the key challenges that are likely to be encountered in changing and influencing the workforce to achieve these objectives?
 - What are their concerns?
 - Trade union involvement?
6. How are you currently delivering services for disabled and older people?
7. What are the key factors which influence this?
8. What are the key methods that you are using to deliver more efficiently and effectively?
9. What needs to happen to enable the Housing Support Partnership to deliver a singular approach to change?
 - Shared mind-set
 - Interactions necessary to facilitate this way of thinking?
10. Are there any barriers to enabling an effective integration of services?

Appendix D

Interview Topic Guide 2

Semi-structured interviews - corporate and external executives

1. How do the managers in the Home Improvement Agency partnership contribute to the agenda of your service?
2. Is there anything that these managers could do to be more effective?
3. What helps your relationship with these managers?
4. What gets in the way of developing an effective relationship?
5. What do you feel the managers within the Home Improvement Agency partnership have achieved so far?
6. How effective do you feel the activities of the managers in the Home Improvement Agency partnership is in meeting customer expectations?
7. How effective are home adaptations and home improvements to meeting the future challenges for delivering services for disabled and older people?
8. How does the activities of the Home Improvement Agency meet your expectations in terms pursuing the objective of enabling people to live in their own homes for as long as possible?
9. How effective are managers in the Home Improvement Agency in terms of developing effective working relationships with partner agencies across the county?
10. How effective are managers in the Home Improvement Agency partnership in attempting to deliver a singular approach to change?
11. How could the managers in the Home Improvement Agency be more effective in contributing to your agenda?

Appendix E

Interview Topic Guide 3

Second semi-structured interviews (middle managers)

1. What are the managers in the HIA project team doing to engage with top tier and external executives?
2. What should the managers in the HIA project team be doing to be more effective?
3. What helps?
4. What gets in the way?
5. What do you feel the HIA partnership has achieved in terms of gaining the buy-in from top tier executives (Corporate Management Team / Meetings of full Cabinet)?
6. How effective is the HIA partnership in gaining buy-in from influential external partners?
7. How does the HIA meet the requirements of top tier and external executives?
8. How does the HIA meet the expectations of top tier and external executives in terms of ensuring that services are being delivered more efficiently and effectively?
9. How effective is the HIA in terms of working with partner authorities across the county in attempting to deliver a singular approach to change?
10. How effective is the HIA in terms of sustaining long term financial security?
11. What should the future scope of the HIA service be to secure long term security?
12. What would be the ideal model for running the HIA service?
13. To what extent is the HIA still a project?
14. What specialists and resources would help the HIA continue to deliver effective services?